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# USDA-NRCS Watershed Programs Listening Session Santa Fe, NM

National Headquarters

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## Watershed Programs Mission



To further watershed conservation, protection, and rehabilitation programs through project cooperation of federal and local governments across the nation



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# NRCS Watershed Programs



## NRCS Watershed Program Leadership

- NRCS Watershed Programs Overview
- NRCS Roles and Responsibilities
- Sponsor Roles and Responsibilities
- WFPO and Rehabilitation Program Eligibility
- WFPO and Rehabilitation Funding Processes
- Policy Revisions





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# NRCS Watershed Programs Overview



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# NRCS Watershed Programs



1. **Watershed & Flood Prevention Operations Program (WFPO)**
2. **Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP)**
3. **Watershed Rehabilitation Program (REHAB)**



# Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations

## Purpose

To provide state, local and American Indian tribal governments vital options to protect watersheds and vital infrastructure, benefiting communities in every state and territory in the nation



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# Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations

## Overview

- Public Law 83-566, Public Law 78-534
  - NRCS cooperates with local Sponsors
  - Sponsors carry out, operate, and maintain projects
  - NRCS provides technical, financial, and credit assistance

## Statistics

- Over 2,000 watershed projects
- Over 11,840 watershed dams
- \$2.2 billion in average annual benefits nationwide



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# Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations

## Program Benefits

- Urban and Rural communities
- Agricultural, Environmental, and Social benefits
  - Flood Prevention
  - Watershed Protection
  - Public Recreation
  - Fish and Wildlife
  - Agricultural Water Management
  - Municipal and Industrial Water Supply
  - Water Quality Management
  - Watershed Structure Rehabilitation



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# Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations

## Eligibility

- Public Sponsorship
- Watershed Projects up to 250,000 acres
- Max total capacity of 25,000 acre-feet
- 20% of benefits must be agriculture related
- Authorized NRCS watershed plan EA/EIS
- Congressional approval for federal funding over \$25 million for construction



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# Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations

## Program Outline

- Sponsors request NRCS assistance to:
  1. Request plan authorization
  2. Carryout existing authorized plan
  3. Prepare NRCS watershed Plan-EA/EIS
- NRCS assists sponsor with project feasibility report and preliminary investigation
- Project sponsors carry out and fund specific parts of the Watershed Plan
- NRCS provides financial and technical assistance
  - Planning, Design, Construction



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# Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations

## Fiscal Year 2017

- \$150 million in NRCS funds
  - Planning
  - Design
  - Construction
- 20 states with 48 projects
- First Funding in 7 years



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# Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations

## Fiscal Year 2018

- \$150 million in NRCS funds
  - Planning
  - Design
  - Construction
- 16 states with 47 projects



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# Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations

## Fiscal Year 2019

- \$150 million in discretionary funds
  - Planning
  - Design
  - Construction
- \$50 million in mandatory funding (Farm Bill)
- 21 states with 76 proposals requesting \$280M



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# Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations

## Cost Share

Federal Cost Share by Purpose		
Purpose	Engineering	Construction
Flood Prevention	100%	100%
Watershed Protection	100%	Varies
Fish/Wildlife/Public Recreation	100%	Up to 50%
Agricultural Water Management	Up to 100%	Up to 75%
M&I Water Supply	0%	Up to 50%
Water Quality Management	Up to 100%	Varies
Rehabilitation	Up to 100%	Up to 100%



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# Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations

Fiscal Year	Program Funding
2000	\$99 M
2001	\$99 M
2002	\$106 M
2003	\$109 M
2004	\$86 M
2005	\$74 M
2006	\$75 M
2007	\$0 M
2008	\$29 M
2009	\$24 M
(ARRA) 2009	\$145 M
2010	\$30 M
2017	\$150 M
2018	\$150M
2019	\$200 M*
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,376 M</b>

Includes \$50M of Mandatory funding in the Farmbill



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# Emergency Watershed Protection Program

## Purpose

To provide emergency repair and restoration recovery assistance when sudden watershed impairments occur that creates an imminent threat to life or property





# Emergency Watershed Protection Program

## Overview

- Provide local communities assistance to recover from natural disasters such as:
  - Floods
  - Fire
  - Drought
  - Windstorms
  - Earthquakes
- Must reduce threats to life or property
- Must be economically, environmentally, and socially defensible
- Exigency vs Emergency
- Recovery and Flood Plain easements



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# Emergency Watershed Protection Program

## Eligibility

- Private entities may only receive EWP recovery assistance through an eligible project sponsor such as:
  - State Governments
  - Cities
  - Towns
  - Counties/Parishes
  - Municipal Authorities
  - Native American Tribes and Tribal organizations
- Eligible Lands
  - Private land
  - Non-Federal public land
  - Federal lands on Non-Federal right-of-way



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# Emergency Watershed Protection Program

## Sponsor Responsibilities

- Participate on damage survey assessment teams
- Secure land rights for repair work
- Obtaining all permits
- Local cost share
- Administer local contracts
- Necessary operations and maintenance



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# Emergency Watershed Protection Program

## Program Outline

- Natural Disaster occurs
- NRCS conducts a rapid survey damage assessment
- Sponsor submits written application for assistance to State Conservationist
- Determine exigencies vs emergencies
- Damage Survey Report (DSR)
  - Completed/Approved
- NRCS provides financial and technical assistance



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# Emergency Watershed Protection Program

## Funding

- Standard Cost Share (75/25)
- Limited Resource Cost Share (90/10)
  - Housing values <75% state average
  - Per capita income <75% of state average
  - Unemployment twice the US average

## EWPP Funding by Year

Fiscal Year	Program Funding
2006	\$306 M
2007	\$10 M
2008	\$490 M
2009-2011	\$0 M
2012	\$216 M
2013	\$235 M
2014	\$0 M
2015	\$79 M
2016	\$157 M
2017	\$103 M
2018	\$541 M
2019	\$217.5 M
Total	\$2,354.5 M



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# Emergency Watershed Protection Program

## Debris Removal



**Before**



**After**



# Emergency Watershed Protection Program

## Grade Stabilization



**Before**



**After**



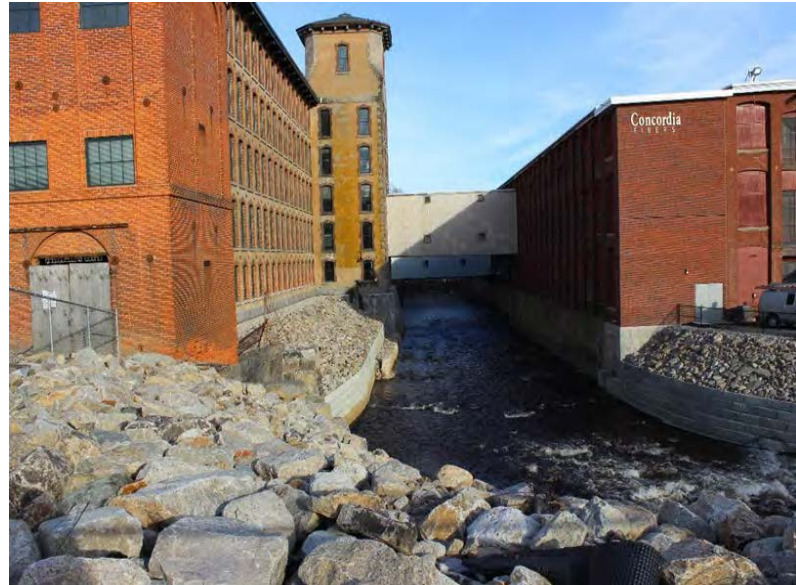


# Emergency Watershed Protection Program

## Streambank Stabilization



**Before**



**After**





# Emergency Watershed Protection Program

## Fire Recovery



**Before**



**After**



# Watershed Rehabilitation Program

## Purpose

Provides technical and financial assistance to rehabilitate and extend service life of dams originally constructed with assistance of NRCS Watershed Programs



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# Watershed Rehabilitation Program

## Overview

- Authorized by Public law 83-566
- 11,840 dams in 1,271 watersheds since 1948
- Aging NRCS dams nearing end of service life
  - Watershed development
  - Land use changes
  - Sediment Accumulation
  - Structural Deterioration



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# Watershed Rehabilitation Program

## Program Benefits

- 47 million people protected
- Dam Rehabilitation Purposes
  - Water Supply
  - Sediment and Erosion control
  - Public Safety
  - Flood Protection
  - Recreation
  - Wildlife Habitat



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# Watershed Rehabilitation Program

## Eligibility

- Originally constructed through a NRCS Watershed Program
  - PL 83-566
  - PL 78-534
  - Pilot Watershed Program
  - Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)
- Priority given to high risk dams
- NRCS provides assessment, planning, design, and implementation assistance
  - 65% total rehabilitation cost
  - Not to exceed 100% construction costs



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# Watershed Rehabilitation Program

## Program Outline

- Local Sponsor requests NRCS assistance
- Dam assessment
- Planning Phase
- Design Phase
- Construction Phase



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# Watershed Rehabilitation Program

Rehab Funding History	
Fiscal Year	Program Funding
2000	\$8 M
2001	\$8 M
2002	\$10 M
2003	\$30 M
2004	\$30 M
2005	\$28 M
2006	\$32 M
2007	\$31 M
2008	\$20 M
2009	\$35 M
2010	\$83 M
2011	\$17 M
2012	\$15 M
2013	\$14 M
2014	\$262 M
2015	\$83 M
2016	\$12 M
2017	\$21 M
2018	\$12 M
2019	\$10 M
Total	\$761 M



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# NRCS Roles and Responsibilities



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# NRCS Responsibilities

## NRCS State Responsibilities

The State Conservationist (STC) is responsible for the overall management of the Watershed Program in his or her State and is to provide for the coordination, organization, and management of program activities to ensure that all phases of the program are carried out effectively and efficiently.



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# NRCS Responsibilities

## NRCS State Responsibilities

### (i) Adherence to State and Federal Requirements

- The STC of the State in which the watershed or major portion thereof is located will provide overall guidance and ensure that the watershed project plan adheres to all statutory, regulatory and policy requirements of the State.
- Plans on Federal Lands.—Project measures planned for installation on Federal lands must conform to the standards and specifications of NRCS, as well as those of land-administering agencies involved. Where differences in standards exist, conform to the highest standard.
- Fish and Wildlife Service Notification.—The STC must notify the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in order that it may provide recommendations for fish and wildlife resources, in accordance with the provisions of Public Law 83-566 Section 12.



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# NRCS Responsibilities

## NRCS State Responsibilities

### (ii) Watershed Program Information Assistance

- NRCS will provide information to interested parties on the potential for and type of assistance available through the Watershed Program.
- NRCS will also provide guidance in making preliminary investigations to determine if assistance is warranted and help in preparing the necessary applications.

### (iii) Preparation of the Watershed Project Plan

- NRCS will assist the sponsoring local organization (SLO) in preparing a watershed project Plan environmental assessment (Plan-EA) or environmental impact statement (Plan-EIS) with the cooperation and assistance of State, local, and other Federal agencies. NRCS is responsible for the content and quality of the Plan-EIS, Plan-EA, or Plan-EE for the purposes of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance.
- NRCS and the SLO will each bear responsibility for funding their own costs incurred for watershed project planning and public participation.



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# NRCS Responsibilities

## NRCS State Responsibilities

### (iv) Implementation Assistance

- NRCS will provide technical assistance, financial assistance, or both to install measures for projects that include approved Watershed Program implementation assistance.

### (v) Real Property Rights Work Maps

- Real property rights work maps will be provided by NRCS to the SLO. Further land rights responsibilities are provided in this manual in Title 390, National Watershed Program Manual (NWPM), Part 504, Subpart A, Section 504.3.

### (vi) Operation and Maintenance Assistance

- NRCS will provide technical assistance to the SLO in the operation and maintenance (O&M) of projects and replacement of installed measures as defined in the O&M agreement.

### (vii) Soil and Water Conservation District or Natural Resource District Involvement

- NRCS will encourage the SLO to invite each soil and water conservation district (SWCD) and natural resource district (NRD) in the project area to participate in watershed project activities as an official project sponsor.



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# NRCS Responsibilities

## NRCS National Headquarters Responsibilities

- The Deputy Chief is responsible for coordinating the development of national policy, standards, and procedures for project planning, installation, operation and maintenance, and allocation of program funds.
- The Division director provides staff leadership to support this and confers with the other divisions, as well as with appropriate Federal agencies and congressional committees to deliver the program.
- The Watershed Surveys and Planning Program national program manager will review all Watershed Program plans for programmatic compliance. This programmatic review is conducted after the National Water Management Center review and before the final plan is sent to the Chief.
- The Watershed Operations Program national program manager will review all watershed project plan modifications, including revisions and supplements for programmatic compliance.
- The Watershed Rehabilitation Program national program manager will review all watershed rehabilitation plans for programmatic compliance.
- By exchange of correspondence, the Chief approves watershed project plans for funding authorization, subject to appropriations, after all reviews and comments are addressed.



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# Sponsor Roles and Responsibilities



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# Sponsor Responsibilities

## Sponsor Responsibilities

Watershed projects are sponsored by one or more local organizations. The STC must require that at least one SLO of each project provide for the functions listed below:

(1) **Power of Eminent Domain.**—At least one SLO must have the power of eminent domain so that it may acquire real property, water, mineral, and other rights needed for the project (Public Law 83-566 Section 4(4)). This is not required for projects where all works of improvement are to be installed by land treatment long-term contracts.

(2) **Permits and Licenses.**—The SLO must acquire needed permits, and licenses in accordance with local, State, and Federal laws.

(3) **Authority to Levy Taxes.**—At least one SLO must have and exercise the authority to levy taxes or provide another adequate means of financing the local share of the cost of the project as well as operation and maintenance expenses.



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# Sponsor Responsibilities

## Sponsor Responsibilities

(4) **Land Treatment above Reservoirs.**—The SLO must obtain agreements from landowners to implement soil conservation plans that meet NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) criteria on not less than 50 percent of the lands situated in the drainage area above each retention reservoir to be installed with Watershed Program funds (Public Law 83-566 Section 4(5)). Projects that include land treatment practices must, at a minimum, have an SLO that has soil and water conservation responsibilities organized under State law.

(5) **Public Participation.**—The SLO must arrange for and carry out activities that encourage the public to participate in the watershed project planning process.

(6) **Financial.**—The SLO must show evidence of commitment for funding, installing, operating, and maintaining the project. The SLO will perform all contracting for construction of any structure, except that NRCS may perform contracting upon request.



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# Sponsor Responsibilities

## Sponsor Responsibilities

(7) **Watershed Management.**—The SLO must implement needed watershed management features such as permitting, zoning, land use regulations, easements, or upstream watershed protection.

(8) **Municipal and Industrial (M&I) Water.**—The SLO must provide evidence that any proposed municipal and industrial water supply use will be acceptable in quantity and quality to meet the anticipated needs. The SLO must provide all technical services to implement M&I water supply. The SLO must provide adequate assurances prior to initiation of construction that USDA will be reimbursed for at least one-half of the cost of M&I storage for current demand and all of the cost of M&I storage for future demand.



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# Sponsor Responsibilities

## Sponsor Responsibilities

(9) **Operation and Maintenance.**—The SLO must use its powers and authority to ensure the installation, operation, and maintenance of the project as planned (Public Law 83-566 Section 4(3)).

(10) **Storm and Sanitary Sewers.**—New storm and sanitary sewers, or relocations and changes to existing sewer facilities, in urban or built-up areas are the sole responsibility of the SLO.



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# Sponsor Responsibilities

## Sponsor Responsibilities

### Sponsoring Local Organization Request Planning Assistance

It is the responsibility of the SLO to request NRCS planning assistance and authorization to develop either a watershed project plan under Public Law 83-566 or a subwatershed plan under Public Law 78-534, including an environmental assessment (EA) or an environmental impact statement (EIS). The following items are needed to support a request for planning authorization:

- (i) Preliminary investigation report, indicating project feasibility
- (ii) Valid application – Standard Form (SF) 424



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Program Eligibility



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Program Eligibility

## WFPO Program Eligibility

- No project will be funded for planning or implementation under the Public Law 83-566 or Public Law 78-534 authority unless it meets all requirements set fourth in the National Watershed Program manual.
- The undertaking must be for the benefit of the general public
- Must comply with applicable federal, State and local laws, regulations and Executive orders



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Program Eligibility

## WFPO Program Eligibility

- All watershed plans shall be sponsored by entities legally organized under State law or by any Indian tribe or tribal organization having the authority to carry out, operate and maintain works of improvement.



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Program Eligibility

## WFPO Program Eligibility

- The Watershed Program requires the development of physically, environmentally, socially, and economically sound watershed project plans with actions scheduled for implementation over a specified period of years.
- Project sponsors must have the legal authority and resources to carry out, operate, and maintain works of improvement



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Program Eligibility

## WFPO Program Eligibility

- Three general purposes:
- (i) Preventing damage from erosion, floodwater, and sediment
- (ii) Furthering the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water
- (iii) Furthering the conservation and proper utilization of land



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Program Eligibility

## WFPO Program Eligibility

Authorized project purposes

### (i) Flood Prevention (Flood Damage Reduction)

- Flood prevention or flood damage reduction measures are installed to prevent or reduce damages caused by floodwater. Flood damage reduction is further defined as the control and disposal of surface water caused by abnormally high direct precipitation, stream overflow, or floods aggravated or caused by wind or tidal effects. Flood damage reduction and mitigation measures reduce or prevent floodwater damages by reducing runoff, erosion, and sediment; modifying the susceptibility of improvements in the floodplain to damage; removing damageable property from the floodplain; or reducing the frequency, depth, or velocity of flooding. Measures may also include actions that prevent encroachment into the floodplain.



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Program Eligibility

## WFPO Program Eligibility

Authorized project purposes.

### (ii) Watershed Protection

- Watershed protection consists of onsite treatment of watershed natural resources concerns for the primary purpose of reducing offsite floodwater, erosion, sediment, and agriculture-related pollutants. Watershed protection plans may include ecosystem restoration type activities. Any practice or combination of practices listed in Title 450, National Handbook of Conservation Practices (NHCP), may be considered for inclusion in the systems of practices included in a watershed protection project plan. Project measures for watershed protection include land treatment practices installed by land users to conserve and develop any of the following:
  - Soil
  - Water quality and quantity
  - Woodland
  - Fish and wildlife habitats
  - Energy
  - Recreation and scenic resources



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Program Eligibility

## WFPO Program Eligibility

Authorized project purposes.

### (ii) Watershed Protection

- Public Law 83-566 requires that the SLO must “obtain agreements to carry out recommended soil conservation measures and proper farm (conservation) plans from owners of not less than 50 percent of the lands situated in the drainage area above each retention reservoir to be installed with Federal assistance.” USDA policy requires installation of land treatment practices necessary to ensure that at least 50 percent of the land upstream from any retention reservoir is adequately protected before beginning construction of the retention reservoir.



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Program Eligibility

## WFPO Program Eligibility

Authorized project purposes.

### (iii) Public Recreation

- Public recreation developments may be included in a watershed project plan when the SLO agrees to operate and maintain a reservoir or other area for public recreation. Project measures must include only minimum basic facilities needed for public health and safety and access to, and use of the area. Minimum basic facilities may include picnic areas, sanitary facilities, fishing piers, shelters, cooking grills, parking areas, swimming beaches, access roads, water, and trails. Also included are practices to provide needed access, water, and power.

### (iv) Public Fish and Wildlife

- Fish and wildlife development areas may be included in a watershed project plan when the SLO agrees to operate and maintain a reservoir or other area for public fish and wildlife access. Measures installed for public use of areas developed to improve the habitat or the environment for the breeding, growth, and development of fish and wildlife may be included in a watershed project plan.



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Program Eligibility

## WFPO Program Eligibility

Authorized project purposes.

### (v) Agricultural Water Management

- Agricultural water management includes drainage, ground water recharge, irrigation, water conservation, water quality improvement, and agricultural (including rural communities) water supply. Measures planned for these purposes are installed on non-Federal land by the SLO to benefit groups of landowners and communities. Measures on Federal land will be installed and maintained in accordance with mutually satisfactory arrangements among the SLO, the land administering agency, and NRCS.

### (vi) Municipal and Industrial Water Supply

- Municipal and industrial (M&I) water supply includes measures necessary to provide storage capacity in reservoirs to increase the availability of water for present and future municipal and industrial use. Needed outlet works and pipelines to convey water from the reservoir to the existing or proposed treatment facilities or water system are also considered project measures. The planning, design and installation of municipal and industrial water wells, water treatment plants, distribution systems, and electric distribution facilities fall outside the scope of the Watershed Program.



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Program Eligibility

## WFPO Program Eligibility

Authorized project purposes.

### (vii) Water Quality Management

- Water quality management measures provide water storage capacity in reservoirs for regulation of stream flow to improve water quality in streams.

### (viii) Watershed Structure Rehabilitation

- Watershed structure rehabilitation is covered in Public Law 83-566 Section 14, which authorizes financial assistance to local organizations to cover a portion of the costs of rehabilitating dams originally constructed as part of a project carried out under any of the following four authorities—Public Law 83-566, Public Law 78-534, the pilot watershed program authorized under the Department of Agriculture Appropriation Act of 1954, or the Resource Conservation and Development Program authorized by the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981.



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Program Eligibility

## WFPO Program Eligibility

### Project Scope

#### (1) Maximum Watershed Size

The maximum watershed or subwatershed area cannot exceed 250,000 acres. This limitation does not apply to Public Law 78-534 subwatershed plans.

#### (2) Maximum Structure Size

No structure providing more than 12,500 acre-feet of floodwater detention capacity or more than 25,000 acre-feet of total capacity may be included in the plan. Total capacity is defined as the total volume of space available for water and sediment upstream of a dam below the elevation at which discharge begins in the primary auxiliary spillway. This limitation does not apply to Public Law 78-534 subwatershed plans.



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Program Eligibility

## WFPO Program Eligibility

### Project Scope

### Recreational Development Limitations

(1) The number of recreation developments within a watershed must be limited by the size of the watershed: one development in a watershed project of less than 75,000 acres, two developments in a project of between 75,000 and 150,000 acres, or three developments (the maximum number allowed) in a project of more than 150,000 acres (Public Law 83-566 Section 4(1)). Need must be demonstrated, taking into account the anticipated day use of the projected recreational development and considering the availability within the region of existing water-based outdoor recreational developments.

(2) Private development within land rights acquired with Federal cost-share funds for the purpose of public fish and wildlife or public recreation is prohibited. The exception to this is for facilities that are constructed or operated by private concessionaires on a controlled permit basis to serve the planned use of the improvement or development approved by the SLO and NRCS.



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Program Eligibility

## WFPO Program Eligibility

### Project Scope

#### C. Water Quality Management Reservoir Storage Limitations

Works of improvement for water quality management that consist of water storage capacity in reservoirs for regulation of stream flow must not be provided as a substitute for adequate treatment or other methods of controlling waste at the source (Public Law 83-566 Section 4(2)). Works of improvement for water quality management must be consistent with State water quality standards developed in accordance with Public Law 92-500 Sections 208 and 319, as amended.



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Program Eligibility

## Watershed Rehabilitation Program Eligibility

Rehabilitation is defined as all work necessary to extend the service life of a dam and to meet applicable safety and performance standards. Only dams originally constructed with assistance from the following four programs are eligible for rehabilitation assistance: Public Law 83-566, Public Law 78-534, Pilot Watershed Program authorized under the Department of Agriculture Appropriation Act of 1954, and the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program authorized by the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981.



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Program Eligibility

## Watershed Rehabilitation Program Eligibility

Rehabilitation work will result in changes to a dam's "as-built" condition; this may include any of the following:

- (1) Extending the useful life of the dam beyond the original evaluated life
- (2) Correcting damage to the dam from a catastrophic event (100-year frequency rainfall event or a storm event that produces a flow in the auxiliary spillway of at least 2 feet or more in depth)
- (3) Correcting the deterioration of structural components that are deteriorating at an abnormal rate
- (4) Upgrading the dam to meet changed land use conditions in a watershed served by the dam or changed safety criteria applicable to the dam
- (5) Decommissioning (removal) of the structure and stabilizing the site



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Program Eligibility

## Watershed Rehabilitation Program Eligibility

Rehabilitation work does not include activities that are operation and maintenance. A dam is not eligible for rehabilitation assistance if there are maintenance needs that have not been addressed or if the need for rehabilitation is the result of lack of maintenance.



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Funding Processes



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Funding Processes

## WFPO Funding Process

- Funding is appropriated by Congress
- NRCS NHQ announces funding availability and proposal submittal period.
- The STC works with project sponsors to identify priority project needs.
- NRCS State offices work with sponsors to develop project proposals for new and backlog projects.
- Remedial request and final engineering investigation reports are submitted.



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Funding Processes

## WFPO Funding Process

- NHQ funds remedial request that are supported by an approved engineering investigation report.
- Backlog proposals submitted by the deadline are reviewed and ranked by an interdisciplinary team at NHQ.
- Eligible Backlog Proposals are submitted to Deputy Chief, associate Chief and Chief for final funding approval.



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Funding Processes

## WFPO Funding Process

- NHQ Watershed team allocates funds to the approved Backlog projects.
- New proposals submitted by the deadline are reviewed and ranked by an interdisciplinary team at NHQ.
- Eligible New Proposals are submitted to Deputy Chief, associate Chief and Chief for final funding approval.
- NHQ Watershed team allocates funds to the approved New projects.



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# WFPO and Rehabilitation Funding Processes

## Rehab Funding Process

- Congress Appropriates Rehab funds to NRCS.
- NHQ announces availability of funding and works with states to receive their project funding needs.
- Rehab request are ranked.
- Funding proposal is submitted to Deputy Chief, associate Chief and Chief for final funding approval.
- NHQ Watershed team allocates funds to the approved rehab projects.



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# Policy Revisions



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# Policy Revisions

## Policy Revisions

The current National Watershed Program Manual (NWPM) is in the process of being updated to add clarity, reflect current Agency operations, and current regulations. The policy is expected to be revised and ready for distribution by winter of 2019.

The current NWPM is the 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, released in April of 2014

Other releases of the NWPM include:

1<sup>st</sup> Edition – September 1981

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition – December 1992

3<sup>rd</sup> Edition – December 2009

Until a new policy is adopted, the current policy is in effect and projects funded prior to a new policy should follow the current policy.



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# Policy Revisions

## Policy Revisions

The following applies to all projects funded until current policy is changed.

- For authorized backlog plans receiving Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO) funding, states should follow the NWPM policy that was in place at the time the plan was originally authorized. However, states must reaffirm the feasibility of these backlog projects and verify the resource concerns and land use downstream to determine if the original plan is still feasible.
- For new plans receiving WFPO, Rehab or RCPP funding to authorize a plan under P.L. 83-566 or P.L. 78-534, the current NWPM policy should be followed.
- Backlog projects must meet current technical criteria regardless of when the plan was originally authorized. The hazard class of all backlog projects must be reassessed to determine the current hazard classification and appropriate design criteria must be used.



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# Policy Revisions

## Policy Revisions

Some proposed revisions include:

- Providing clear guidance for conducting analyses under the Principles, Requirements, and Guidelines for Water and Land Related Resources Implementation Studies and Federal Water Resource Investments ” (2017)
- Clearly defining responsibilities for projects with Municipal and Industrial Water Supply



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# Policy Revisions

## Policy Revisions

- Revised the cost share table layouts so that they are easier to read.
- Clearly identified the SLO and NRCS roles in developing watershed plans
  - SLO is responsible for preparing the watershed project plan with assistance from NRCS.
  - The NRCS responsibility in plan selection is to decide whether to approve NRCS assistance for installing the alternative selected by the SLO.



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# Policy Revisions

## Policy Revisions

- Clarifying requirements if a pre-NEPA plan is revised.
  - The EA or EIS and revised plan will be one document.
  - The revised Plan-EA or Plan-EIS replaces the original pre-NEPA plan.
  - If work is proposed to be conducted on any component of a pre-NEPA plan that is not revised, a new EA or EIS must be prepared.



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# Policy Revisions

## Policy Revisions

- Acknowledging PR&G influence on the preferred alternative
  - If the National Economic Development (NED) plan is selected, rationale must be provided to support that the primary objective of maximizing net economic benefits is being achieved. Key factors that influenced the decision on the preferred alternative must be described.
  - If the NED plan is not selected, the status of the exception to the NED plan requirement must be documented.



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# Policy Revisions

## Policy Revisions

- Remove the requirement for NHQ review of preliminary draft plans prior to public and interagency review.
- Remove the hydrologic and hydraulic criteria from Watershed Rehab work for correcting damage to the dam from a catastrophic event.
- Clarify the procedure for release of the remaining Federal interest.



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# Policy Revisions

## Policy Revisions

Release of the remaining Federal interest.

- Is a Federal decision which requires documentation of the effects of the agency decision on the human environment under NEPA.
- Before the structure can be released, the Sponsor will be required to:
  - 1) Complete an assessment of the structure, documenting its current condition, function, and operation.
  - 2) Coordinate with NRCS to complete an inspection of the structure
  - 3) Notify NRCS of any planned structural changes that may affect the original watershed plan
  - 4) The Sponsor may be required to have NRCS technical review of the modifications
  - 5) Ensure that modifications to the structure will meet current dam safety requirements.



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