

## News Release

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### USDA to provide funding to restore land damaged by Hurricane Ida in East Providence, Middletown and Narragansett

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WARWICK, RI (July 7, 2022) – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has approved up to \$12.2 million in federal funds for the purchase of floodplain easements and restoration of land damaged by Tropical Storm Ida in East Providence, Middletown and Narragansett, RI. The federal assistance will safeguard lives and property from imminent hazard of flooding, severe erosion and loss of infrastructure in future storms.

The federal funding was requested through the [Emergency Watershed Protection \(EWP\)](#) program. EWP authorizes NRCS to purchase permanent easements on eligible lands and restore the floodplain functions in the easement area to their natural conditions. Participation is voluntary.

Restoration may include both structural and non-structural measures to bring back floodplain functions such as water storage and flow, control erosion, and establish native vegetation.

“Floodplains can provide significant protection from flood damages to downstream landowners,” said **Phou Vongkhamdy**, Rhode Island State Conservationist for NRCS. “These easements will significantly limit future uses of land in the floodplains, making it available to store flood water. Restoration of the land to a natural condition will increase flood storage capacity.”


Only land in the affected sections of the three communities is eligible for floodplain easement enrollment with this funding and must meet one of the following criteria:

- Lands within a floodplain damaged by flooding at least once within the previous calendar year or that have been subject to flood damage at least twice within the previous 10 years.

- Other lands within the floodplain that would contribute to the restoration of flood storage and flow, provide for control of erosion, or that would improve the practical management of the floodplain easement.

Following are the estimated project costs by municipality. NRCS will cover 100 percent of actual project costs (except for infrastructure), up to \$12.2 million.

<b>CITY/TOWN</b>	<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>
East Providence	\$9,645,398
Middletown	\$1,606,626
Narragansett	\$991,549
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$12,243,573</b>

NRCS has entered into an agreement with the [Rhode Island Association of Conservation Districts \(RIACD\)](#)  , which will accept applications from eligible landowners, secure appraisals and acquire land. The RIACD will contact eligible landowners with information on how to apply for EWP and work with them through the application, appraisal and acquisition process, if they choose to participate. The easement acquisition process is expected to begin in early July and construction is expected to begin in the spring of 2023 and be completed next summer.

NRCS is a federal agency that works hand-in-hand with conservation districts and the people of Rhode Island to improve and protect soil, water and other natural resources. For more information, visit [www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov)