United States Department of Agriculture

# NRCS Watershed Programs

**FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION**
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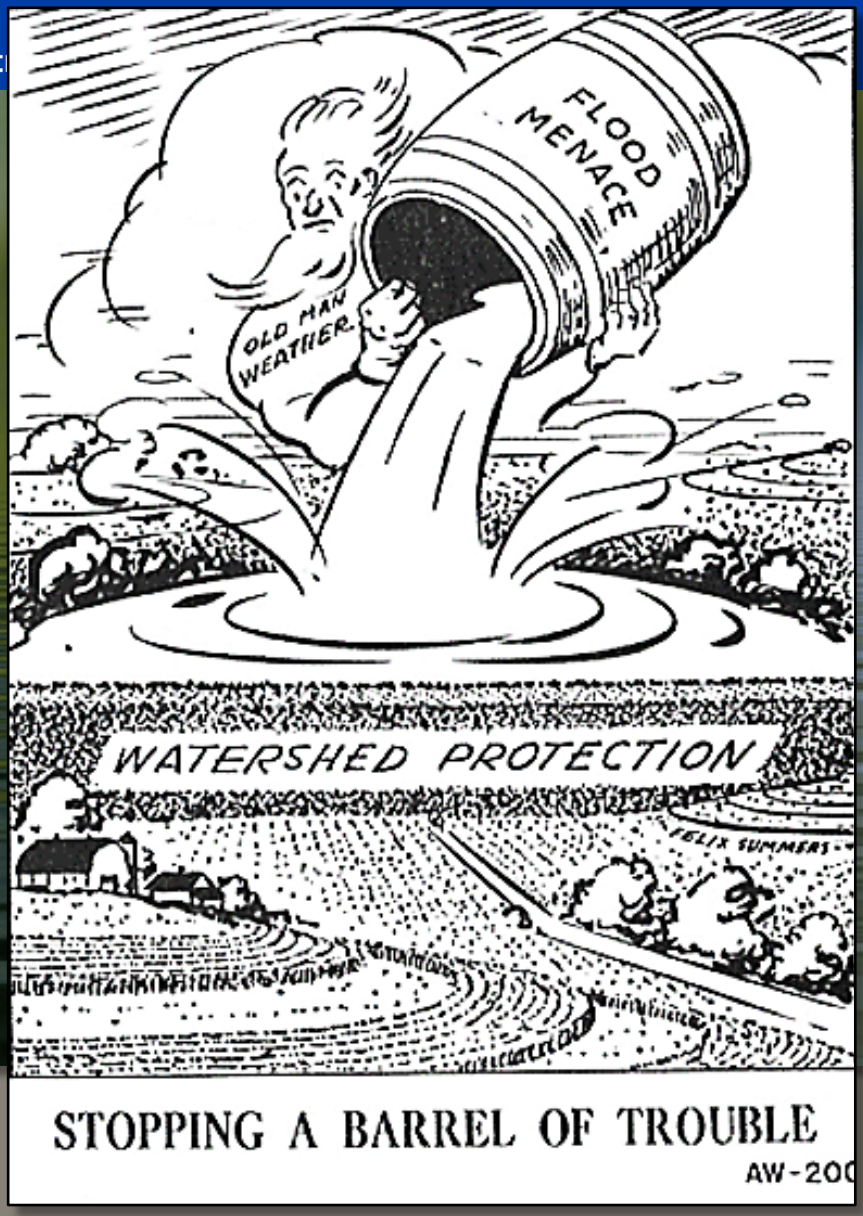
# Declaration of Policy


- *Erosion, floodwater, and sediment damages in the watersheds of the rivers and streams of the United States, causing loss of life and damage to property, constitute a menace to the national welfare; and it is the sense of Congress that the Federal Government should cooperate with States and their political subdivisions, soil or water conservation districts, flood prevention or control districts, and other local public agencies for the purpose of preventing such damages, of furthering the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water, and the conservation and utilization of land and thereby of preserving, protecting, and improving the Nation's land and water resources and the quality of the environment.*

Flood Prevention Operations Program authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1944 (P.L. 78-534)

Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (PL-566)



# Watershed Programs

Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO) Program

Watershed Rehabilitation (REHAB) Program

Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program

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Watershed Programs

# Conservation Measures

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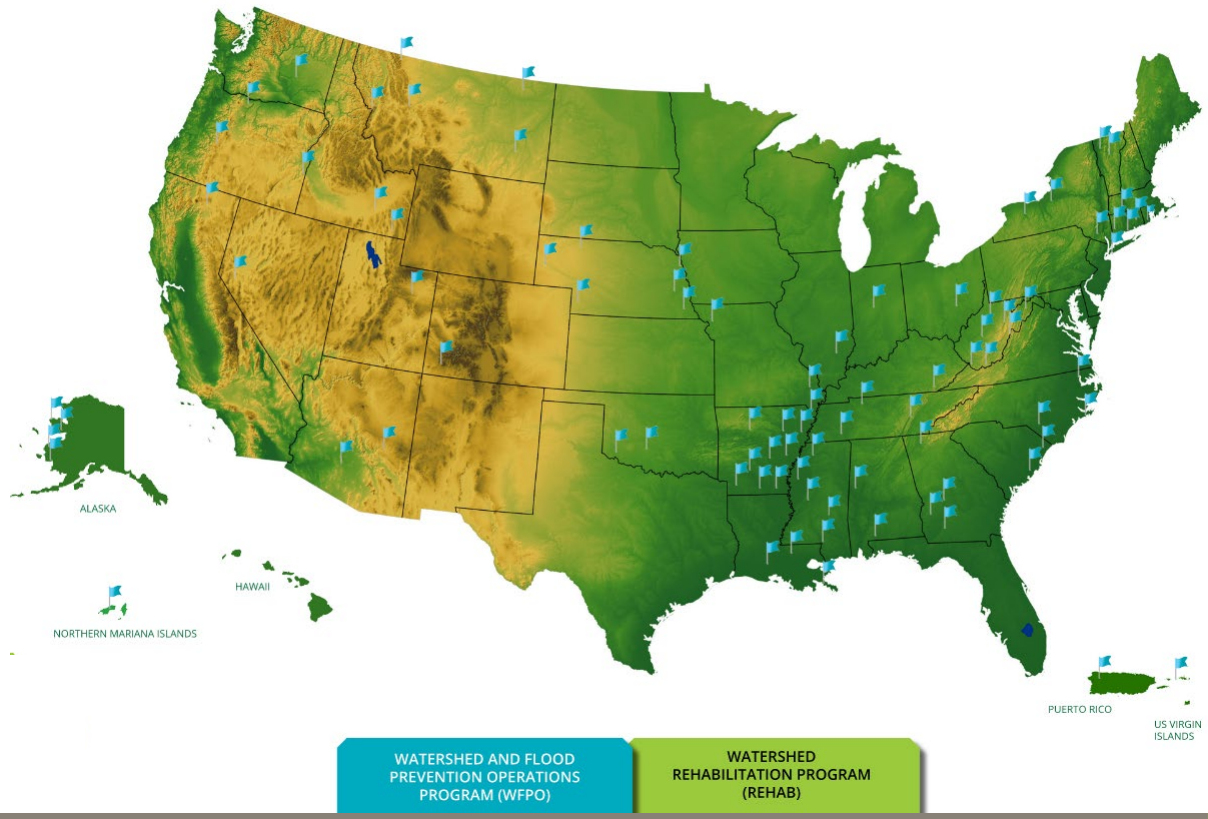
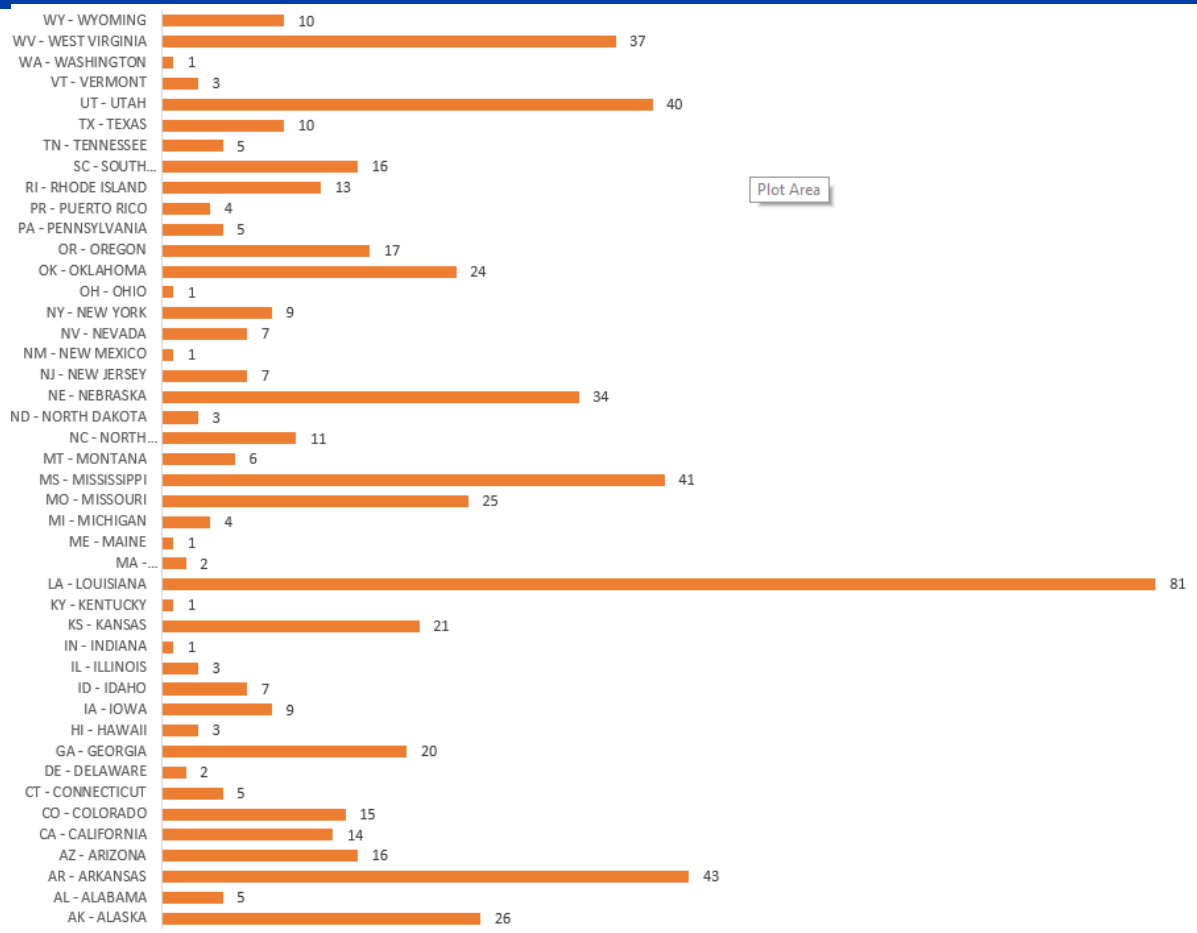
- $500M WFPO
- $118M REHAB
- $300M EWP




# Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Funding

Current FY23 Allocations

WFPO Funding




# Watershed and Flood Prevention

# Watershed Funding Since 2017

| Funding in the Millions | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fiscal Year | WFPO | REHAB | EWPP |
| 2017 | $150 | $21 | $103 |
| 2018 | $150 | $12 | $541 |
| 2019 | $200 | $10 | $217 |
| 2020 | $225 | $10 | |
| 2021 | $225 | $10 | |
| 2022 | $150 | $1 | $275 |
| 2022 (IIJA) | $500 | $118 | $300 |
| 2023 | $125 | $2 | $925 |
| Total | $1,725 M | $184 M | $2,361 M |

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# USDA-NRCS Watershed Programs

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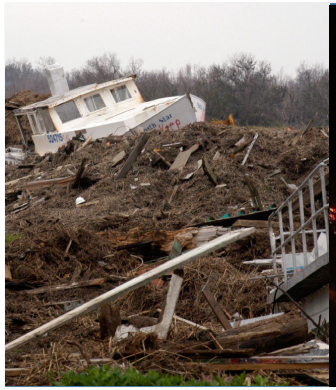
# Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP)



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# From the Beginning

## EWP Process

A natural disaster creates flooding & erosion threats

Sponsor formally requests assistance

STC completes a Damage Survey Report (DSR) and cost estimates

Available funds are allocated to State to implement emergency practices

# EWP Context

## Planning

- Damage Survey Report
- EE with CPA-52
  - Cat Ex, Programmatic EIS

## Design

- National Engineering Manual
- NRCS conservation practice standards & specs

## Construction

- Provide Emergency Watershed Protection

How is this work done?

Through a NRCS/Sponsor Agreement:

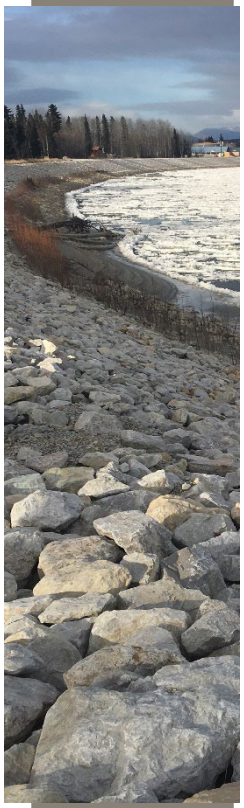
- Details the responsibilities and cost share of NRCS and Sponsor
- Will document if/how funding will be provided to a sponsor based on the sponsor's contribution to planning, design, and construction

# EWP Provides Recovery Assistance

Federal Emergency Declaration

Local Watershed Emergency

**EWP Program Available**



## NRCS/Local Coordination

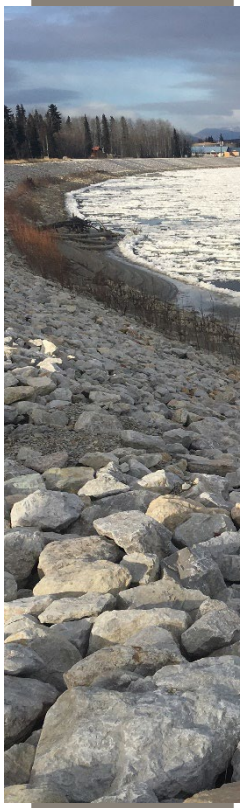
- Identify EWP Opportunities
  - Flooding Protection
  - Stop Additional Erosion

## EWP Measures

- Remove Threats
- Restore the Natural Environment
- Can Use NRCS Conservation Practices

# Program Eligibility

**Natural Event** + **Watershed Impairment** + **Imminent Threat** = **Watershed Emergency**



**Property EWP Program Can Be Used to Protect:**

- Permanent structures
  - Houses & Buildings
  - Roads & Utilities
  - Dams & Flood Control

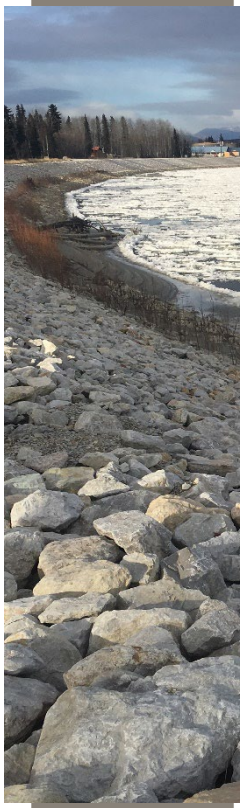
**EWP Program Cannot Be Used to Protect Only:**

- Standing Timber
- Orchards
- Agronomic crops
  (other USDA programs are available for Ag Land)

# Eligible EWP Practices

**'every time, all the time' EWP Conditions**

- Provide protection from flooding or soil erosion
- Reduce threats to life or property
- Restore the hydraulic capacity to the natural environment to the maximum extent practical
- Be economically/environmentally defensible & technically sound



*The Fine Print*

- NRCS may determine that a measure is not eligible for assistance for any reason.
- NRCS will not provide funding for activities undertaken by a sponsor prior to the signing of an agreement.

# Common EWP Practices

**Streambank and Shoreline Protection (580)**

**Critical Area Planting (342)**

**Clearing and Snagging (326)**

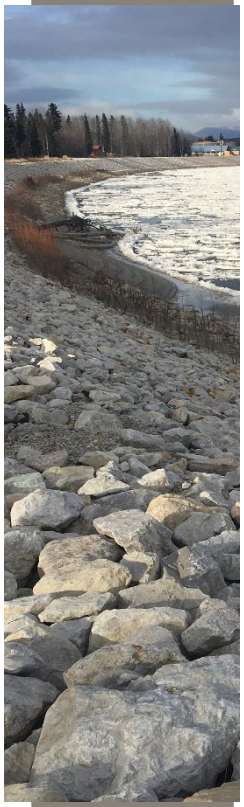
**Obstruction Removal (500)**

**Mulching (484)**

**Grade Stabilization Structure (410)**

**Channel Bed Stabilization (584)**

**Structure for Water Control (587)**



**Policy and Guidance being developed for:**
**Relocations, buyouts, and local easements**

# Conclusion

The EWP Program provides protection from flooding and soil erosion when necessary to safeguard lives and property when a natural occurrence causes a watershed impairment.

## Sponsor Request for Assistance

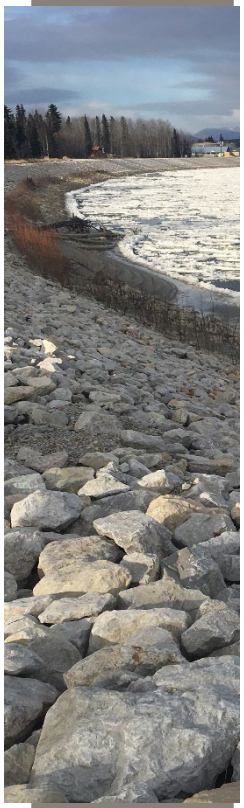
- Units of government
- Sponsors have responsibilities during planning, design, construction, and maintenance

## Damage Survey Report

- NRCS will proposes practices and cost estimates
- NRCS follows requirements, limits, and practice eligibility criteria when providing financial assistance

## Formal Agreement

- The agreement will detail responsibilities and cost share
- The agreement will document if and how funding is provided based on the sponsor's role during planning, design, and construction



# EWPP - SUCCESS STORY

**Sheridan Landslide**

Would not have been completed without EWP Program

Sponsor = Sheridan School District

- Slide directly across from school

NRCS assisted with erosion prevention

- Stream widened

City paid for path and aesthetic with grants

Delivered through a design build process

Hermit Peak and Calf Canyon Wildfire Burned over 341,000 acres in San Miguel, Mora, and Taos Counties


# Emergency Watershed Protection

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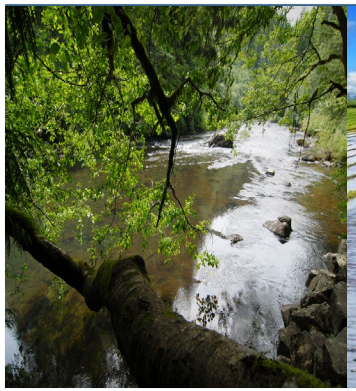
# Watershed & Flood Prevention Operations Program (WFPO)



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# Overview

*The WFPO Program provides for cooperation between the Federal government and the States and their political subdivisions to address resource concerns due to erosion, floodwater, and sediment and provide for improved utilization of the land and water resources*

- NRCS assist local sponsor to implement watershed projects (locally led)
- NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to the sponsor to complete a project
- WFPO can also fund eligible remedial projects (NRCS assisted)

# Statutory Requirements

- Public Sponsorship
- Watershed Projects up to 250,000* acres
- Max total capacity of 25,000 acre-feet
- 20% of benefits must be agriculture/rural related
- Authorized NRCS watershed plan EA/EIS

**Several recent appropriations have waived this requirement for projects that have a purpose other than flood prevention*

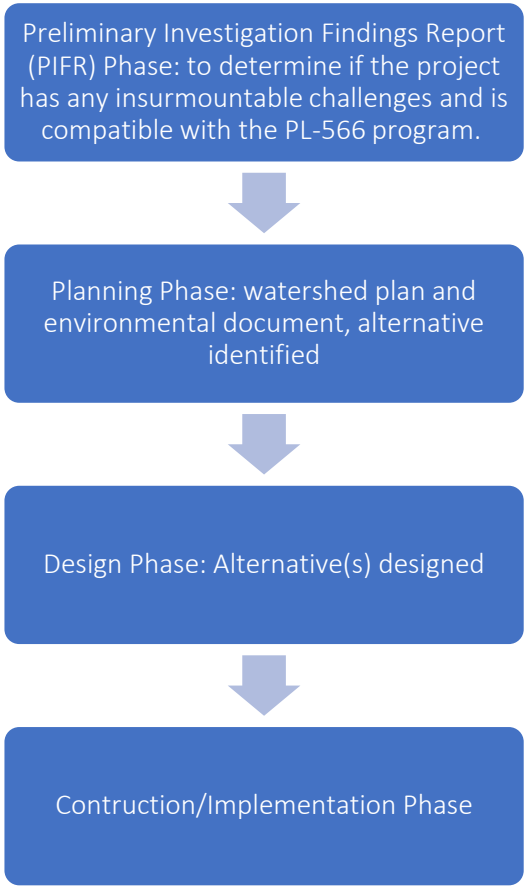
# Sponsor Responsibilities

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

- Power of Eminent Domain
- Permits and Licenses
- Authority to Levy Taxes
- Land Treatment above Reservoirs
- Public Participation
- Financial
- Watershed Management
- Municipal and Industrial (M&I) Water
- Operation and Maintenance
- Storm and Sanitary Sewers

# Program Process:

Generally "phased":



# Program Purposes:

| Purpose and Cost Share | | |
|---|---|---|
| **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 |

# Flood Prevention (Flood Damage Reduction)

*100% Engineering/100% Construction*

- Measures are installed to prevent or reduce damages caused by floodwater.
- 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.
- Measures should:
  - 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.

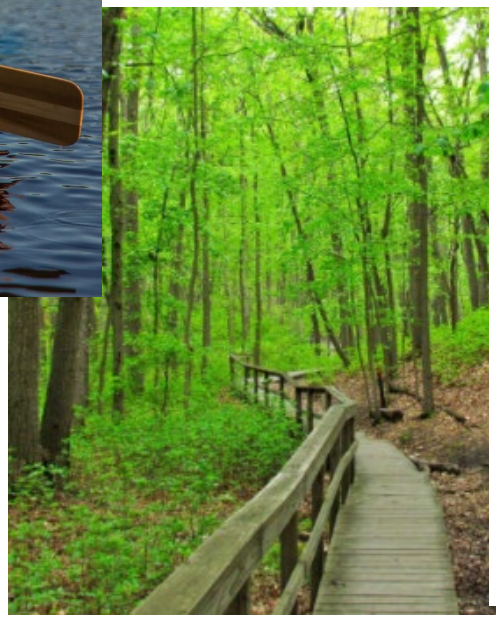
# Watershed Protection

*100% Engineering/Construction % Varies*

- Consists of onsite treatment of watershed natural resources concerns for the primary purpose of reducing offsite floodwater, erosion, sediment, and agriculture-related pollutants.
- May include ecosystem restoration type activities.
- Measures can include:
  - Any practice or combination of Conservation Practices.
  - 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.

# Public Recreation

*100% Engineering/Up to 50% Construction*

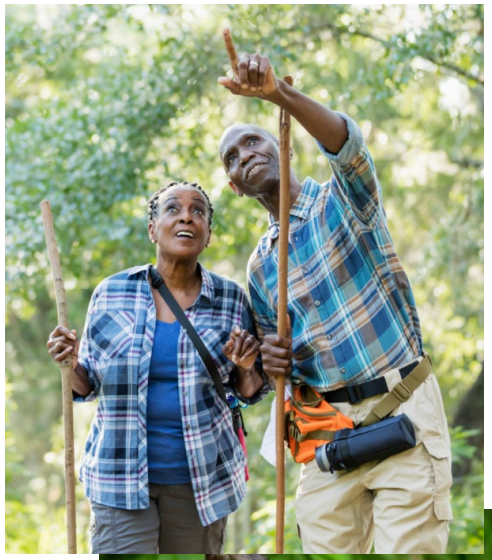



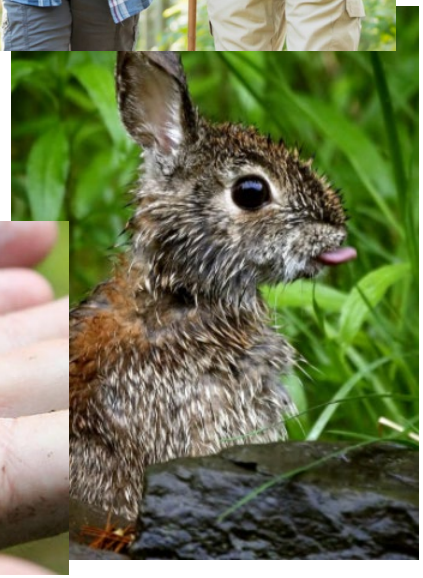
- Public recreation developments may be included in a watershed project plan when the SLO agrees to operate and maintain a reservoir or other area for public recreation.
- Measures must include only minimum basic facilities needed for public health and safety and access to and use of the area.
  - Picnic 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.

# Public Fish & Wildlife

*100% Engineering/Up to 50% Construction*

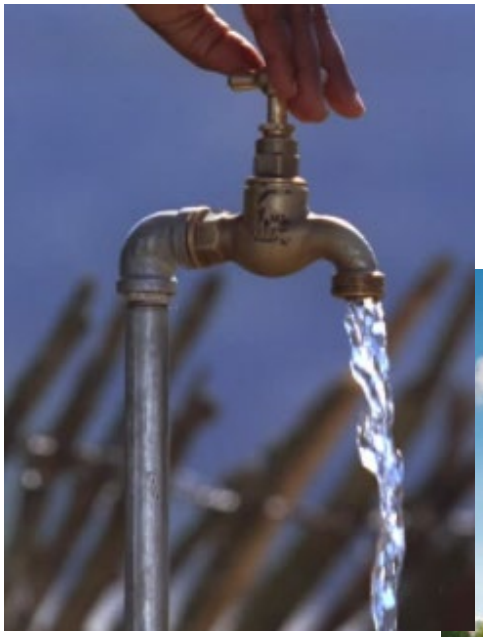
- Fish and wildlife development areas may be included in a watershed project plan when the SLO agrees to operate and maintain a reservoir or other area for public fish and wildlife access.
- Measures installed for public use of areas developed to improve the habitat or the environment for the breeding,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





# Agricultural Water Management

*Up to 100% Engineering/Up to 50% Construction*

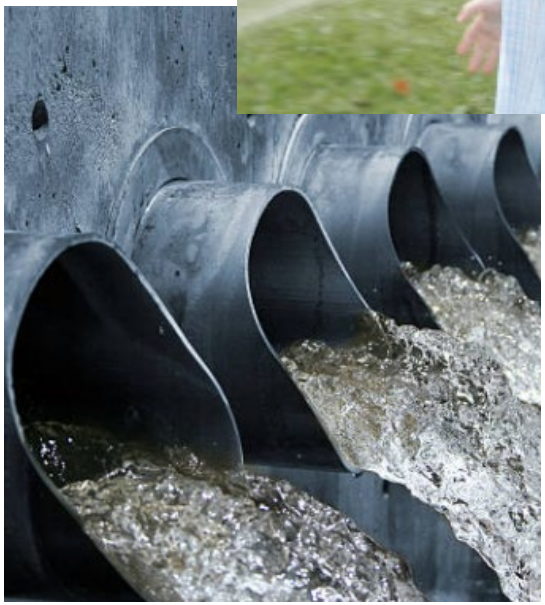


- Includes drainage, ground water recharge, irrigation, water conservation, water quality improvement, and agricultural (including rural communities) water supply.
- Measures planned for these purposes are installed on non-Federal land by the SLO to benefit groups of landowners and communities. Measures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

# Municipal and Industrial Water Supply

*0% Engineering/Up to 50% Construction*

- The term “municipal water supply system” means the reservoirs, canals, ditches, flumes, laterals, pipes, pipelines, and other surface facilities and systems constructed or installed for the collection, impoundment, storage, transportation, or distribution of drinking water. [16 USC § 6511(12)]
- Measures include those 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.



# Water Quality Management

*Up to 100% Engineering/Construction % Varies*

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

# Implementation

- Once a project is selected for funding, funds are allocated to the NRCS State Office. *(Generally one phase funded at a time)*
- NRCS state staff can choose to complete need work via:
  - Agreement with the sponsor
    - *Note: PIFRs cannot be completed by sponsor*
  - National IDIQ Contract
  - State NRCS Staff
- NRCS reviews & approves technical work completed at stages
  - National Water Management Center (Technical Review)
  - National Watershed Staff (Programmatic Review)

| Phase | What's Needed to Request Funds |
|---|---|
| PIFR | Letter from Sponsor, STC Request letter to Deputy Chief of Programs. |
| Planning | Approved PIFR. |
| Design | Plan EA/EIS has been submitted for Authorization by the Chief. |
| Construction | Land rights and all permits obtained, designed has been approved by the SCE. |

# Implementation

- Ideal project timeframes are

| PHASE | DURATION |
|---|---|
| PIFR | Up to 12 months |
| Plan EA/EIS | Up to 18 months |
| Design | Up to 24 months |
| Construction | 2-5 years |

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# Watershed Rehabilitation Program (REHAB)

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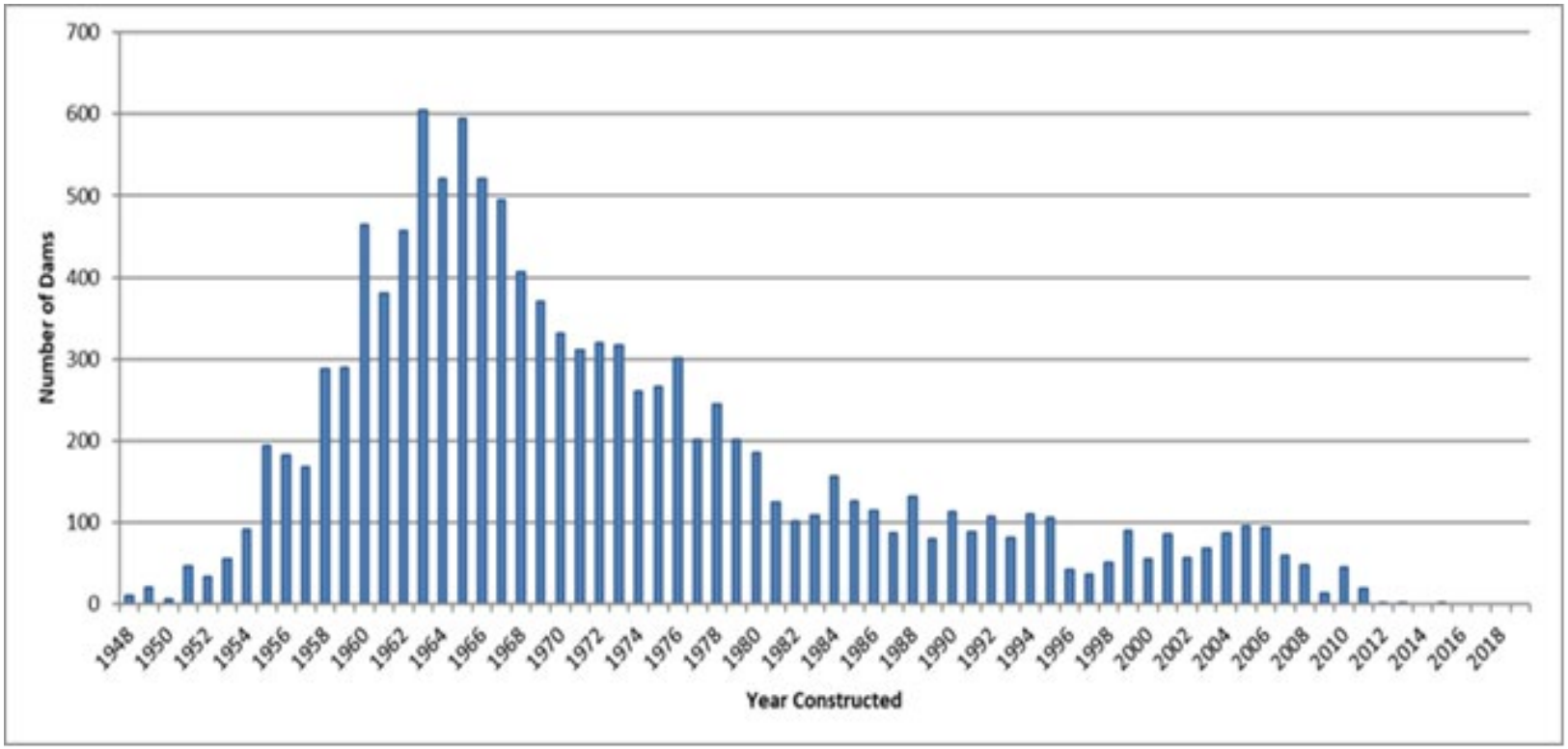
# Overview

**11,850 dams constructed in 1,271 watersheds since 1948**




# Concern - Risk to Life & Property

- Change in hazard class
- Change in design criteria
- Change in land use
- Sediment accumulation
- Structural deterioration

# Eligibility

- Dams originally constructed through a NRCS Watershed Program
  - PL 83-566
  - PL 78-534
  - Pilot Watershed Program
  - Resource Conservation and Development
- Dams can be past their evaluated life
- O&M must be current

# NRCS Implementation Plan

# NRCS Implementation Plan

| Phase | Duration |
|---|---|
| Assessment | Up to 12 months |
| Plan EA/EIS | Up to 18 months (goal) |
| Design | Up to 24 months (goal) |
| Construction (rehabilitation) | 2-3 years |

# Dam Assessment

- Preliminary investigation of the condition of an existing dam
- Determines the current hazard potential of the dam
- Identifies the “Breach Zone”
- Is it possible to rehabilitate this dam to the federal standards (TR-60 )?

# Dam Assessment (Con't.)

- Determines if the dam is eligible for rehab
- Provides conceptual alternatives for rehabilitation
- 12 months to complete

# Roles and Responsibilities

## Sponsor

- Request assistance by letter

## NRCS

- Prepare report in accordance with NWPM 505.31
- Provide copy of report to SLO and NHQ

## Cost

- $25,000 to $35,000 (funded 100% by NRCS)

# Implementation - Planning

# Supplemental Watershed Plan

- In-house, SLO Agreement, or IDIQ Contract
- Cost $250,000 - $900,000
- Contents
  - Scoping (public involvement)
  - Affected Environment
  - Alternatives
  - Environmental Consequences
  - Consultation, Coordination, & Public Participation
  - Preferred Alternatives

# Supplemental Watershed Plan (Con't.)

## Reviews

- NRCS State – initial review
- NWMC – technical review
- NHQ – programmatic review

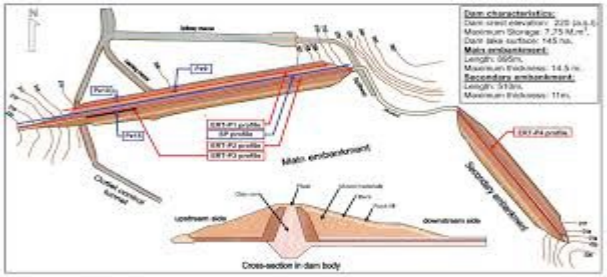
*Note: See National Instruction Part 301 for guidance in reviewing watershed plans.*

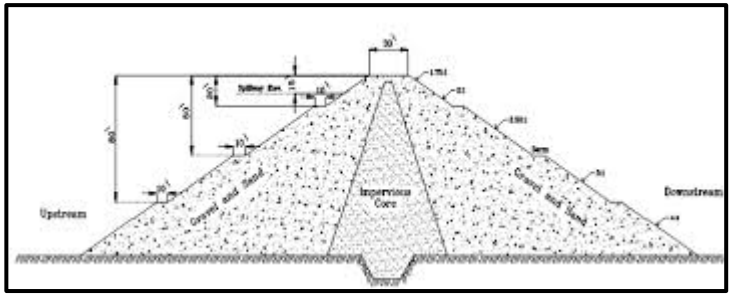
# Implementation - Design

# Design

In-house, SLO Agreement, or IDIQ Contract

- Design SOW
- Design Criteria - TR-60 criteria
- Cost $250,000 - $900,000
- Reviews
  - NDCSMC - Preliminary (30%)
    Final (90%)



# Cost Share

NRCS provides pays for design costs when completed in-house or NRCS IDIQ contract

If Sponsor pays for design cost, it is included in the total project. NRCS costs shares as follows:

- 65%  of total project cost
- Not to exceed 100% construction costs

# Construction

Federal Contract

- Contracting Team

SLO Agreement

- Grants and Agreements Team

# Funds Request

Funds for new projects can be submitted at anytime.

June 30 - Final date for submitting funding requests for the FY.

Current funding allows for continuous funding the last 2 FYs

# Questions?