

these lands, emergency work is done by either NRCS or FS as mutually agreed. In carrying out their responsibilities, FS and NRCS work cooperatively with other Federal, State, and local government agencies.

**§ 624.5 Eligible emergencies, recipients, and assistance.**

(a) *Conditions of eligibility.* Emergency watershed protection assistance is made available when the following conditions of eligibility are determined to exist by the state conservationist. Procedures for providing emergency assistance vary according to whether the watershed emergency constitutes an exigency or a nonexigency situation. Emergency measures for both types of situations are those undertaken to remove or reduce hazards created by the disaster to safeguard life and property from flooding, drought, or the products of erosion.

(1) *Watershed emergency.* A watershed emergency exists when a natural occurrence causes a sudden impairment of a watershed that creates an imminent threat to life or property. To be eligible for assistance, the imminent threat to life or property must significantly exceed that which existed before the impairment.

(i) *Natural occurrence* includes but is not limited to floods, fires, windstorms, earthquakes, volcanic actions, and drought.

(ii) A *watershed impairment* exists when the ability of a watershed to carry out its natural functions is reduced to the extent of creating an imminent threat to life or property.

(iii) A *sudden watershed impairment* results from a single natural occurrence or a short-term combination of occurrences. Watershed impairments resulting from long-term combinations or series of natural or other occurrences are not considered sudden watershed impairments.

(iv) *Exigency and nonexigency situations.* Watershed emergencies are classified as either exigency or non-exigency situations.

(A) An *exigency* exists when the near-term probability of damage to life or property is high enough to demand immediate Federal action. An exigency continues to exist as long as the prob-

ability of damage continues at a high enough level.

(B) A *nonexigency* situation exists when the near-term probability of damage to life or property is high enough to constitute an emergency but not sufficiently high to be considered an exigency. A nonexigency situation continues to exist as long as the probability of damage remains high enough to be considered an emergency.

(v) *Changes in emergency situations.* Changes in the near-term probability of threat to life or property will be reflected by changes in the classification of emergencies. As the near-term probability that the threats will be realized is reduced because of emergency assistance or other factors, exigency and nonexigency situations will be appropriately reclassified. Similarly, as occurrences increase the probability of threats to life or property, situations previously considered nonemergencies will be appropriately reclassified as nonexigencies and previous non-exigency emergency situations will be appropriately reclassified as exigencies.

(vi) *Drought emergencies.* Assistance is available in drought emergencies when the eligibility criteria specified in this rule are met and the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) determines that a drought emergency exists under regulations promulgated to carry out sections 401 and 402 of the Agriculture Credit Act of 1978 (Pub. L. 95-334).

(b) *Eligible recipients.* Include those public or private landowners, land managers, land users, or others who—

(1) Have a legal interest in or responsibility for the values threatened by a watershed emergency; and

(2) Have exhausted or have insufficient funds or other resources available to provide adequate relief from the applicable hazards. Interested persons other than Federal agencies must be represented by a project sponsor. Project sponsors must:

(i) Be a State or political subdivision of a State or a qualified Indian tribe or tribal organization;

(ii) Have legal authority and agree to use such authority to obtain needed landrights, water rights, and permits; and

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(iii) Agree to provide for the operation and maintenance of completed emergency measures.

(c) *Eligible assistance.* (1) In an exigency—

(i) Federal emergency funds may bear up to 100 percent of the construction costs of emergency measures.

(ii) Funds must be obligated within 10 days after receipt of the emergency funds or after the date of the disaster event when conditions permit beginning construction activities, whichever is later.

(iii) Emergency work must be completed within 30 days after funds are obligated.

The NRCS Chief retains discretion to grant extensions for good cause. Documentation must support requests for extensions. Extensions may extend an additional 10 days for the obligation of funds and an additional 30 days for the completion of work.

(2) In a nonexigency—

(i) Federal emergency funds may bear up to 80 percent of the construction costs for emergency measures.

(ii) Funds must be obligated and construction completed within 220 consecutive calendar days after the date of receipt of funds. Extensions are permitted at the discretion of the NRCS Chief if unforeseen or uncontrollable events cause delays. A request for such an extension must be documented.

(3) Sponsors may provide their share of construction costs in the form of cash; in-kind services such as labor, equipment, etc.; or a combination of cash and in-kind services. Cost sharing is waived for measures to be installed on Federal lands such as national forests or national grasslands.

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§ 624.6 Eligible measures.

(a) *Eligibility.* To be eligible for assistance a measure must—

(1) Retard runoff, prevent flooding, or prevent soil erosion;

(2) Reduce threats to life or property resulting from a watershed emergency;

(3) Be economically and environmentally defensible and sound from an engineering standpoint;

(4) Be limited to the minimum that will reduce applicable threats to a level

not to exceed that which existed before the impairment of the watershed;

(5) Yield beneficial effects to more than one individual except in an exigency; and

(6) Conform to rules and regulations published by NRCS for complying with Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, and Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management.

(b) *Documentation.* (1) When an exigency does not exist, the economic rationale of proposed measures must be submitted in appropriate detail with the request for funds. Generally, the expected value of imminent damages (amount of damages multiplied by the near-term probability of their occurrence) must exceed the cost of emergency measures. Information provided in the request for emergency funds to support economic defensibility of the measures must include but is not limited to—

(i) Number and extent of values at risk because of the watershed impairment;

(ii) Estimated damages to the values at risk if the threat is realized;

(iii) Events that must occur for the threat to be realized and the estimated probability of their occurrence both individually and collectively; and

(iv) Estimates of the nature, extent, and cost of emergency measures to be constructed to relieve the threat.

(2) In nonexigency situations, the state conservationist shall also submit adequate information to substantiate the environmental defensibility the emergency measures proposed for installation. This must include but is not limited to—

(i) Thorough descriptions of beneficial and adverse effects on environmental resources including fish and wildlife habitat;

(ii) Descriptions of water quality and water conservation impacts as appropriate; and

(iii) Analysis of effects on downstream water rights.

The Chief shall issue instructions as are necessary to determine the economic and environmental defensibility of measures proposed for installation consistent with this rule.

(c) *Implementation.* (1) When planning emergency measures, emphasis should