



October 17, 2003

OKLAHOMA BULLETIN NO. OK250-4-2

SUBJECT: FNM – Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program Direct Charge

Purpose: To provide guidance on charging time to damage assessments prior to projects being approved for EWP

Expiration Date: September 30, 2004

URGENT: Please note timekeeping change.

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide interim guidance – until a final decision is made – regarding direct charge of the EWP Program funds. After a natural disaster, the State Conservationist may conduct damage assessments to determine whether an emergency declaration should be made and to estimate the extent of damage. Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) funds are to be used to undertake the damage assessments. In this sense, EWP is similar to other conservation programs where information collection and assessment is undertaken with CTA funds before program funding decisions are made.

As identified in WebTCAS direct charge information, the initial EWP damage assessment should be charged to CTA. The information gathered using CTA funding should be the minimum necessary to advise the sponsor whether or not the site meets the basic EWP eligibility requirements. Those basic eligibility requirements include documentation that: 1) there is an imminent threat to life or property; 2) the recovery measures are for runoff retardation and soil erosion prevention; and 3) the threat was caused by a sudden impairment in the watershed. It is recommended that NRCS personnel use the pertinent sections of the Damage Survey Report (DSR) to document the basic EWP eligibility requirements and the site conditions. Additionally, to avoid duplication of effort and expenses, any information necessary to complete the DSR that can be readily obtained during the initial damage assessment should be incorporated into the DSR.

The information gathered with CTA funds will serve as the basis for the State Conservationist's EWP funding request. The DSR will be completed and finalized when sufficient EWP funding is made available. Tasks to be completed with EWP funds will typically include, but are not limited to, compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and Endangered Species Act.

Damage assessments for EWP floodplain easements (FPE) should provide basic information that would be useful in evaluating potential for easement enrollment. Like EWP recovery activities, all FPE technical assistance proceeding fund commitment or obligation should be charged as CTA.

/s/ - (Randy Freeland – Acting)

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State Conservationist

DIST: AE