

July 7, 2015

Dear Watershed Coalition:

The purpose of this letter is to update/inform/clarify watersheds on the status of Emergency Watershed Program (EWP) in terms of Agreements, Waivers, DSR Timelines & Coalition Priorities. These funds are to be utilized for the locations that were impacted by the 2013 Flood.

AGREEMENTS:

The agreement between NRCS and the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) is ready for signature. Through this agreement the CWCB will be the overall project sponsor for most EWP Phase 2 implementation. Thus, most future agreements will be between CWCB and the coalition, its local fiscal agent or local government. These agreements may include technical assistance (TA) agreements and most likely financial assistance (FA) or construction agreements. The CWCB and the NRCS are currently working on a sponsor's guide that will help educate coalitions and their sponsor(s) on the agreement process for Phase 2 flood recovery. For EWP Projects, NRCS will pick up to 75% of the cost of eligible treatments, the State of Colorado will contribute 12.5%. The local sponsor will be responsible for the other 12.5%. A local sponsor has the following responsibilities: Operation and Maintenance (O&M), obtaining land rights or permissions from the landowners where projects will be completed, and obtaining all necessary permits. The CWCB technical assistance team will be able to assist local sponsors with the latter two responsibilities.

WAIVER:

Colorado NRCS's request for a waiver from the 220 day performance timeframe for EWP projects has been approved by NRCS-National HQ. The waiver has been discussed at some of the coalition meetings and caused some confusion, so further explanation is warranted. What is important to remember is the 220 day clock starts ticking ***ONCE*** a Financial Assistance (FA) or construction agreement is signed between the NRCS and the State (CWCB) for a specific project. Simultaneously, the state may have a corresponding FA agreement with the local sponsor for the same specific project. Both agreements should be signed as closely as possible on the same date, since both FA agreements will have the 220 performance time limit.

DSR TIMELINES & COALITION PRIORITIES:

Most coalitions have been presented information about the Damage Survey Reports (DSR) process that NRCS must go through to implement projects on the ground through EWP. Some of the coalitions were tasked with making a priority list of projects so the DSR process could start. Based on feedback from the coalitions the initial timeframe frame of beginning DSR's in July 2015 has been pushed back. This will provide the coalitions more time to identify their priority projects within the watershed and thus do a more thorough job. The master plan should be the jumping off point to develop the priority list since most if not all of the master plans have a ranking system and priority projects list. NRCS and CWCB are approaching the DSR's in a tiered manner, thus the coalition priorities list can be developed in a tiered manner.

TIERED COALITION DEADLINES:

HIGHEST PRIORITY PROJECTS- clear cut, ready to go, obvious, substantial agreement within the coalition. **DEADLINE TO SUBMIT: JULY 31, 2015**

HIGHER PRIORITY PROJECTS-projects needing further discussion/debate, additional information needed at the coalition level. **DEADLINE TO SUBMIT: AUGUST 30, 2015**

HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS-projects that didn't meet the Highest or Higher list but are still needed, may have needed longer to discuss/debate at the coalition level. **DEADLINE TO SUBMIT: SEPTEMBER 15, 2015**

The DSR process will be completed on a first come, first serve basis. The Damage Survey Report (DSR) is used to determine EWP eligibility, document damage caused by a natural disaster, list treatment methods and costs required to correct the problem, list values at risk along with the dollar value of the item(s) being protected from erosion and future flooding, document environmental concerns and finally calculate the benefit to cost ratio of the proposed treatment.

Teams will be developed to complete the DSRs. Members of the DSR team will be from NRCS, CWCB, local coalition representatives and local sponsors. It is crucial that local knowledge and input from the coalitions/sponsors is utilized throughout the process to complete the DSR. This includes being out in the field with DSR teams. Be prepared to allocate resources to the DSR task.

To minimize confusion when submitting your priority list please utilize the naming conventions and structure as established in your master plan. Please submit in an Excel spreadsheet format. Also include in your table, the ranking system factors and data (scores) used in the master plan for each one of your priority projects. **SEE ATTACHMENT A for 3 examples.** The key point is to utilize the coalition naming conventions/structure as established in your master plan. The DSR's will be named and set up according to how your master plans were established. To deviate from this protocol will cause extensive rework which will slow down progress.


Please send your list of priorities to:


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AND

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Thank you.


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