



News Release

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Sandy victims should apply by April 18 for USDA-NRCS easement program

SOMERSET January 29, 2014 - Eligible New Jersey landowners impacted by Hurricane Sandy can apply now through April 18 for the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) second round of the Emergency Watershed Protection Program – Floodplain Easements (EWP-FPE). Through this emergency floodplain easement program, NRCS is able to purchase permanent easements on eligible lands and restore the area to natural conditions. "Floodplain easements are a long-term solution to provide relief for landowners while preventing future damage from flooding," NRCS State Conservationist Carrie Mosley said. A healthy floodplain enhances fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, flood water retention and ground water recharge while making it more resilient to flooding.

The program easements are permanent in term. Public and private lands with structures, such as homes, are eligible for enrollment as well as open or agricultural lands. Commercial properties are not eligible for EWP-FPE. If a structure is present, NRCS will commission and fund the removal or demolition of that structure and enroll the remaining lot in a permanent easement. Properties with structures will need to secure a public sponsor who will assume ownership of the property once the warranty easement deed has been executed.

"During the first sign-up, several landowners and potential project sponsors didn't have enough time to apply, didn't know they were eligible, or weren't aware of the program," Mosley said. "This second sign up period is another opportunity to reach those landowners who need relief and assistance."

Priority will be given to applications from property owners that are located next to or near other eligible applicants to encompass an entire floodplain. Applicants not selected during the first sign-up have been invited to participate in the current sign up. "Several applications could not be funded because of their isolated nature. We are hoping that areas surrounding these current applications will apply and fill in these gaps," Mosley said.

Interested landowners should contact their [local USDA Service Center](#) to learn more about the program and submit an application prior to the April 18 deadline. More information is also available on the [NRCS floodplain easement website](#).

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