

USDA Approves Emergency Forest Restoration Assistance

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COLCHESTER, Vt., October 2, 2023 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director John Roberts today announced that all Vermont County FSA offices are approved to accept applications for the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) to address damages from the July rainstorms that caused flooding and land instability in Vermont counties.

EFRP provides cost-sharing payments to eligible owners of nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) land to restore land damaged by a natural disaster. EFRP signup will begin on October 10, 2023 and end on November 8, 2023.

“It is important that producers apply for EFRP assistance timely because program funds will be allocated based on the number of applications received as well as by on-site inspections that will determine the extent of the damage,” said Roberts. “I encourage eligible landowners who haven’t participated in FSA programs to contact their local FSA office as soon as possible because FSA records will have to be created for these individuals.”

After applications are received, local FSA county committees determine land eligibility using on-site damage inspections that assess the type and extent of damage and approve applications.

The approved EFRP practices under this authorization include:

- EF1-Hardwood Forest Restoration
- EF2 – Softwood Forest Restoration
- EF3 Mixed Forest Restoration
- EF9-Other Emergency Forest Restoration Measures.

The components of these practices include Obstruction Removal, Site Preparation, Conservation Cover, Tree Planting, Fencing, and Roads and Other Structures.

Producers with damage from this weather event should apply for assistance prior to beginning reconstructive work. However, producers may still be eligible to participate if restoration work has already been started.

To meet eligibility requirements, NIPF land must have existing tree cover or had tree cover immediately before the qualifying natural disaster and be sustainable for growing trees. The land must be owned or leased by a nonindustrial private individual, group, association, corporation or other private legal entity that has definitive decision-making authority over the land. The natural disaster must have resulted in damage that if untreated would impair or endanger the natural resources on the land and/or materially affect future use of the land.

For more information on EFRP or to begin the application process, contact the Farm Service Agency county office that covers the damaged land or visit **farmers.gov/recover**. County office contact information can be found using the Service Center Locator tool on the website:

<https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator>

Vermont USDA Service Centers:

Addison (802-388-6748) 66 Catamount Park, Middlebury, VT 05753

Franklin/Grand Isle (802-527-1296), 50 S. Main Street, St. Albans, VT 05478

Rutland/Bennington (802-775-8034) 170 S. Main Street, Rutland, VT 05701

Caledonia/Essex (802-748-2641) 481 Summer St., St. Johnsbury, VT 05819

Lamoille (802-888-4935), 109 Professional Drive, Morrisville, VT 05661

Windham (802-254-9766), 28 Vernon Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301

Chittenden/Washington (802-288-8155, 94 Harvest Lane, Williston, VT 05495

Orleans (802-334-6090), 59 Waterfront Plaza, Newport, VT 05855

Windsor/Orange (802-295-7942), 28 Farmvu Drive, White River Jct., VT 05001

Farm Service Agency:

1400 Independence Ave.

SW Washington, DC 20250

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