



United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

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# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **USDA to provide nearly \$469,000 for disaster recovery in Deerfield**

AMHERST, MA – The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced that \$468,750 in Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) funding will be available to the town of Deerfield for damage caused by an April 2005 rain and snow storm.

The funding will cover riverbank stabilization on the Deerfield River that will protect a waste treatment facility serving 123,000 residents and businesses in the Village of Old Deerfield, including Historic Deerfield, the Deerfield Academy, Bement School, Eaglebrook School, and Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association.

Deerfield Select Board chair Carolyn Ness requested the federal assistance after part of the riverbank collapsed in the wake of the April storm, threatening the sewer plant. Fallen trees are also damming the river and causing further erosion.

“We’re pleased to receive this federal assistance through EWP,” said Ness. “If we had to close the sewer plant it would adversely affect a highly visited tourist destination, several private schools and the economy of Deerfield. Stabilizing the bank is also important in order to protect water quality on the Deerfield River.”

Through the EWP program, NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to protect life and property threatened by excessive erosion and flooding caused by the sudden impairment of a watershed from a natural disaster.

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In the past two years the towns of Montague, Shelburne and Worthington have also received \$462,500 in EWP funding for similar restoration work for storm damage. Work on those projects is on-going; the Deerfield work is expected to begin next year after state and federal permitting processes are complete.

“Massachusetts is one of 15 states to receive emergency funding in a recent USDA supplemental appropriation,” said Cecil B. Currin, State Conservationist for NRCS in Massachusetts. “When you consider the technical assistance that NRCS is providing along with the financial assistance, the value of the work in this area over the past three years will be more than one million dollars.”

Nationwide, EWP funds address public safety and restoration efforts on private and public lands and are used to remove debris, restore eroded streambanks, re-seed burned areas and take steps to mitigate threats to people and property from impaired watersheds.

NRCS is a federal agency that works hand-in-hand with Massachusetts conservation districts and other partners to improve and protect the commonwealth’s soil, water and other natural resources. Since 1935, private landowners and communities have voluntarily worked with NRCS specialists to prevent erosion, improve water quality and promote sustainable agriculture. For more information on conservation in Massachusetts, visit [www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov).

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