

Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act

Agencies: U.S. Department of Agriculture (Natural Resource Conservation Service)

Citation: [16 U.S.C. §§ 1001 et seq.](#)

Enacted as: the “Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act”, on August 4, 1954

Summary:

The [Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954 \(WPFPA\)](#) authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to provide technical and financial assistance to entities of state and local governments and tribes (project sponsors) for planning and installing watershed projects. The WPFPA was passed in 1954 when Congress recognized the serious natural resource and economic damages suffered in our Nation’s watersheds from flooding and sedimentation. The WPFPA has been amended several times to address a broad range of natural resource and environmental issues.

The WPFPA authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to assist local organizations in preparing and carrying out plans for “works of improvement”, including undertakings for: 1) flood prevention, 2) the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water, or 3) the conservation and proper use of land in watershed or subwatershed areas.

The Secretary is also authorized to provide cost share assistance to project sponsors in order to obtain wetland and floodplain conservation easements. The acquisition of such easements is for perpetuating, restoring, and enhancing the wetlands and floodplains so they are able to retain excessive floodwaters, improve water quality and quantity, and provide habitat for fish and wildlife. Under the WPFPA, the Secretary can provide up to 50 percent of the cost of acquiring easements. The WPFPA provides assistance to sponsors who develop projects on watersheds up to 250,000 acres (391 square miles).

The [Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program](#), administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Resources Conservation Service, is a unique and flexible approach to natural resources planning and management, focusing on proper land use and the installation of conservation practices. Watershed plans are developed by interdisciplinary teams of technical specialists who assist the project sponsors.

Source: <http://epw.senate.gov/wpfpa.pdf> and <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/landscape/wfpf>

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