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NEWS

For Immediate Release

NRCS Project Changes Name: Watershed Recovery Project



RIVERSIDE, CA. OCTOBER 7, 2004—The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is changing the name of its Tree Mortality Program to the Watershed Recovery Project. The project provides technical assistance and funding to remove dead and dying trees and helps impaired watersheds recover.

The Watershed Recovery Project, which falls under the NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP), is a holistic approach to removing dead and dying trees on private land. This work includes a natural resource assessment of the affected watershed. Cultural resources, endangered species, soil erosion, vegetation, wildlife and community safety are all important factors that are considered before and during project work.

Two years ago, three Southern California Counties requested NRCS assistance to help remove dead and dying trees on private lands in mountain communities. District Conservationists and Emergency Watershed Protection Program managers developed a comprehensive proposal explaining why the project was essential to the health of mountain communities.

After the October wildfires hit last year, legislators realized that NRCS's plan was solid and addressed the concerns of the community and needed immediate implementation.

While valiant firefighting saved many of the communities, as much as 90% of the dead trees remain standing, keeping the threat to life and property at a dangerous level. In the beginning of 2004, NRCS was provided with approximately \$150 million in EWP funding. \$120 million of this was apportioned for use in dead tree removal and associated erosion control in priority areas in the three impacted counties.

For more information on the EWP Program, please visit www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov or call the Natural Resources Conservation Service office in Riverside at 909-684-3722 ext. 104

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