

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Assistance Available to Repair Watersheds after Hurricane Irene

Hato Rey, PR August 26, 2011 – Communities that have suffered damage to watershed areas from Hurricane Irene may be eligible for assistance from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

“Many areas in Puerto Rico have experienced historical rain events after Hurricane Irene. Some drainage ways may have a tremendous amount of debris blocking the flow.” said Edwin Almodovar, NRCS Caribbean Director. “The debris, which is often from downed trees, can create more damage from subsequent rainfall events if not removed quickly.”

NRCS’s Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program is designed to reduce threats to life and property from watershed impairment, such as erosion, debris, and sediment. These impairments can cause additional flooding, soil erosion, and damage to infrastructure.

Most projects require a 25 percent local share of the costs and local sponsors must provide land rights and any needed permits. NRCS provides 75 percent of the cost, assesses the damage, and plans or designs the needed repairs.

In order to provide information related to the EWP program and its eligibility, NRCS will hold two concurrent informative sessions on Wednesday, August 31st. The meetings will be held simultaneously in San Sebastian and Caguas from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. The San Sebastian meeting will be held in El Coliseo Luis Aymat; the Caguas meeting will be held in the Department of Agriculture Caguas Regional Office.

To request EWP assistance or to learn more about the program contact Damaris Medina, EWP Program Coordinator at 787-766-5206 x232 or Damaris.medina@pr.usda.gov. For information about the locations of the meetings, please call our office at 787-766-5206.

Information about NRCS programs in the Caribbean Area is also available online at www.pr.nrcs.usda.gov

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