



USDA Approves Emergency Conservation and Emergency Forest Restoration Assistance for 16 Counties in Michigan

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Michigan

EAST LANSING, Mich., May 29, 2025 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Michigan is accepting applications for the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) and Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) in 16 counties to address severe ice storm damages. ECP provides cost-share and technical assistance to producers to restore farmland to pre-disaster conditions and EFRP provides financial cost-share and technical assistance to restore nonindustrial private forestland (NIPF) damaged by a qualifying natural disaster. ECP and EFRP signup started on May 21, 2025, and ends on Nov. 21, 2025.

"Recovering from the impacts of natural disasters is never easy, but the Farm Service Agency is here to help," said Joel Johnson, State Executive Director for FSA in Michigan. "If you have an immediate need to clean up and restore your operation, please call your local office for restoration practice approval before you take any action."

The following counties are eligible for ECP and EFRP assistance due to the severe ice storm that occurred March 28-30, 2025: Alcona, Alpena, Antrim, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Chippewa, Crawford, Emmet, Iosco, Mackinac, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Oscoda, Otsego, Presque Isle, and Roscommon.

Emergency Conservation Program

Approved ECP practices include debris removal, repair/restoration fencing, restoring or replacing taps and tubing, and debris removal in maple operations.

Approved ECP applicants can receive up to 75% of the cost of the approved restoration activity with a maximum cost share of \$500,000 per natural disaster event.

ECP cost share is authorized to:

- provide reimbursement of costs up to 75% of the total cost of rehabilitating the land, including availability of advance payments for up to 25% of the total allowable cost for all ECP practices before the restoration is carried out, an option that was previously only available for fence repair or replacement. The cost-share payment must be spent within 60 days; and
- allow producers who lease federally owned or managed lands, including tribal trust land, as well as state land, the opportunity to participate in ECP.

Conservation concerns present on the land prior to the qualifying natural disaster event are not eligible for ECP assistance.

Emergency Forest Restoration Program

Approved EFRP practices include hardwood forest restoration, softwood forest restoration, and mixed forest restoration.

Assistance for EFRP is not provided upfront. Cost-share is reimbursed at no more than 75% of the lesser of the actual costs incurred or allowable cost after a restoration activity is complete. If an EFRP application is approved, the program participant is expected to perform restoration and conservation practices based on the FSA-848A Cost-Share Agreement and restoration plan provided. EFRP has a maximum cost share of \$500,000 per natural disaster event.

To participate in EFRP, eligible applicants must:

- Complete restoration to meet technical standards established through FSA by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service or the state forestry agency,
- Document and keep records of all costs incurred to complete the restoration activities, including costs associated with personal labor.

To meet eligibility requirements, NIPF land must have existing tree cover or had tree cover immediately before the natural disaster occurred and be sustainable for growing trees. The land must also 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.

To expedite approvals of restoration work for ECP and EFRP, FSA has waived the onsite inspection for non-engineering ECP practices and for all EFRP forest types to remove hazard trees, surface debris, and fence repair to expedite needs determinations and approvals of restoration work. Additionally, FSA waived the requirement for producers to obtain prior approval to conduct surface debris removal, fence repair and hazard tree removal to support critical disaster recovery efforts. Producers should contact FSA with questions on eligibility, allowable activities and applying for ECP and EFRP assistance.

More Information

To learn more about FSA programs, producers can contact their local [USDA Service Center](#) or visit farmers.gov/protection-recovery. USDA disaster assistance information can also be found on farmers.gov, including the [Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool](#), [Disaster-at-a-Glance fact sheet](#), and [Farm Loan Discovery Tool](#). Additionally, [FarmRaise](#) partnered with FSA to launch an online education

hub comprised of videos, tools and interactive resources, including farm loan information and Livestock Indemnity Program and Emergency Livestock Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program decision tools.

FSA helps America's farmers, ranchers and forest landowners invest in, improve, protect and expand their agricultural operations through the delivery of agricultural programs for all Americans. FSA implements agricultural policy, administers credit and loan programs, and manages conservation, commodity, disaster recovery and marketing programs through a national network of state and county offices and locally elected county committees. For more information, visit fsa.usda.gov.

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