



## Grand County and Northern Water Will Be Local Sponsors for Federal Program

The Grand County Board of Commissioners and the Northern Water Board of Directors have agreed to be sponsors for the [Emergency Watershed Protection \(EWP\)](#) Program for the East Troublesome Fire recovery effort.

The EWP Program is a federal program managed by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to implement watershed protection projects that mitigate risks to **life and property** caused by sudden watershed impairments such as post-fire flooding, sediment or debris. This program identifies projects that, if implemented, may prevent or minimize future loss. By federal law, all local projects that receive EWP funding must have a local sponsor to administer the program.

As sponsors, Grand County and Northern Water will work with Middle Park Conservation District, the Three Lakes Watershed Association, NRCS and the Colorado River District (EWP Partners) to prioritize and implement EWP projects. The EWP Partners are also collaborating with more than 40 other federal, state and local organizations, to ensure the most efficient and effective implementation of emergency watershed restoration recovery efforts in areas of Grand County affected by the East Troublesome Fire of October 2020.

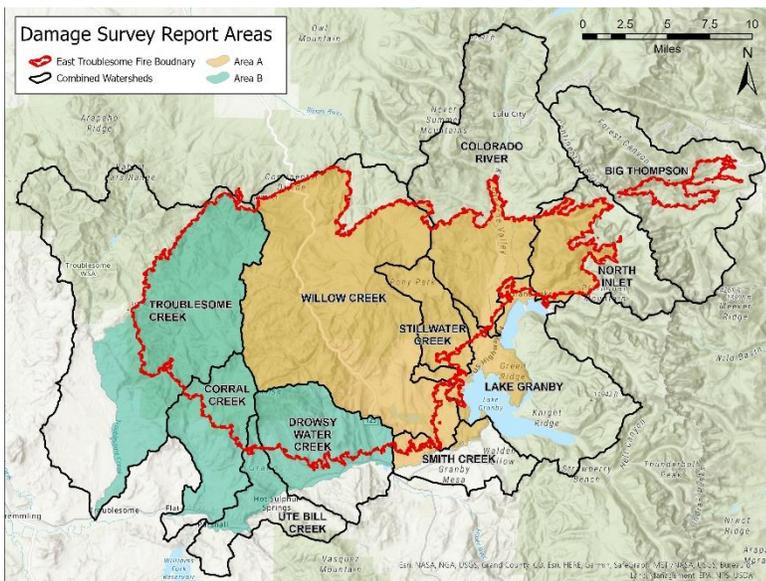
### Field Surveys Help Teams Plan for Next Steps

During the week of February 8, EWP Partners performed field assessments of nonfederal lands in the affected areas of the East Troublesome Fire. Teams identified potential postfire hazards to life and property that may occur in coming months and years; as well as potential treatment options to mitigate hazard risks, and estimated costs of potential treatments.

Postfire hazards may include but are not limited to: stream channels becoming clogged with sediment and debris which may result in flooding; infrastructure such as roads and bridges becoming damaged by increased sediment and debris during runoff; and homes and or other structures that could be impacted by increased water and debris flows. Because of the effects of the fire on the landscape, ephemeral channels might emerge where water has not historically flowed. The assessment teams are working with NRCS to summarize the data and prepare Damage Survey Reports which will be submitted to NRCS national headquarters for funding consideration and possible approval.



Damage survey reports were conducted in February 2021.



Northern Water is the sponsor for Area A and Grand County is the sponsor for Area B as part of the EWP Program.

### CONTACT

Our team is dedicated to helping you through this time of recovery and rebuilding and we are here to support you through this process. If you have any questions, please contact:

Grand County, [watershedrecovery@co.grand.co.us](mailto:watershedrecovery@co.grand.co.us)  
[Grand County Website](#)

Northern Water, [watershedrecovery@northernwater.org](mailto:watershedrecovery@northernwater.org)  
[Northern Water Website](#)



## Project Planning and Funding

Following funding approval, Grand County and Northern Water are working with EWP Partners to develop criteria to prioritize projects identified by EWP and which have the greatest beneficial impact. Watershed recovery funding needs are likely greater than what will be funded through EWP. In addition, EWP funds can only cover 75 percent of recovery costs, and matching funds from other sources must make up the difference. EWP Partners are actively working on raising match funds. Long-term operations and maintenance of projects is also not covered by EWP and will need to be funded separately. The amount of EWP funds has not yet been determined, and local sources of supplemental funding will likely include a mix of state, local and private money. Only projects that have been evaluated and approved by the sponsor agencies and by NRCS will be eligible for EWP funding.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: Who are the local sponsors?**

A: The program requires a local public agency to be a sponsor. Grand County and Northern Water will serve in that capacity and will act as cosponsors covering different geographic areas of the affected area.

### **Q: What do EWP sponsors do?**

A: Sponsors administer federal EWP funds, secure required matching funds, obtain necessary permits and landowner permissions, finalize project designs, and oversee construction and arrange for operation and maintenance of projects.

### **Q: What damages from the fire will be eligible for EWP funding?**

A: Eligible projects must mitigate threats to **life and property** caused by impacts from watershed impairments and must be consistent with projects and regions identified in the NRCS Damage Survey Report.

### **Q: How will projects be prioritized for funding?**

A: EWP sponsors are working with EWP partners to create criteria against which projects will be evaluated. It is very likely that not all qualifying projects will receive funding.

### **Q: How much money will be available for projects?**

A: The amount of funding for local projects is unknown and is determined by NRCS Headquarters in Washington DC. Fire recovery funding needs for the East Troublesome Fire are competing against similar requests for other watershed recovery efforts in Colorado and across the nation.

### **Q: Will funds be available directly to landowners to implement projects?**

A: No funds will be given directly to landowners. Sponsors are responsible for paying qualified contractors to perform EWP projects to NRCS specifications. NRCS then reimburses the sponsor for up to 75 percent of those contractor bills.

### **Q: What are the deadlines for this program?**

A: Projects are expected to begin as soon as EWP funding is approved, and an agreement is signed by NRCS and EWP sponsors. Projects must be implemented within 220 days of NRCS funding approval. Operations and maintenance may continue for the life of a project if necessary.

### **Q: Will Shadow Mountain Reservoir be drained?**

A: No, Shadow Mountain Reservoir will not be drained.

### **Q: How can I learn more?**

A: There will be an online, public open house in coming weeks to answer questions about the program. Please visit [www.northernwater.org/firecovery](http://www.northernwater.org/firecovery) to learn more.