



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

April 20, 2023

**Re: UPDATE – Emergency Watershed Protection Program – Floodplain Easement (EWPP-FPE) 2019 Halloween Flood**

Dear Property Owner:

You are receiving this letter because you reside in the EWPP-FPE Program (buy-out) project area. To the many property owners who are enrolled in the buy-out – the Town of Whitestown and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) thank you for your continued patience and collaboration.

Please know the buy-out is still moving forward and NRCS is still fully committed to funding the buy-out. With that said, while we continue to make progress, we want you to know we have heard your concerns. Due to the constant threat of flooding, we understand the importance of closing on the properties of approved applicants as soon as possible. We also understand the importance of communicating with you on a more regular basis.

Prior to the rain event experienced by the Whitesboro area the evening of April 5 and early morning hours of April 6, the Town and NRCS met to discuss ways the buy-out could be expedited. Collectively, we determined it would be advantageous for the Town to have more control and flexibility over program requirements and management. Consequently, the property buy-outs are now being executed through NRCS' Recovery Program instead of its Floodplain Easement Program to eliminate the need to conform to various federal regulations – the first time this has ever been done solely to serve you the best we possibly can.

**For those property owners already enrolled, this does not change your status in the program, eligibility for a buy-out or anything that has been completed to date.**

Rather, the Town's and NRCS' roles are simply changing, with the goal of shortening the time it will take to schedule closings.

Moving forward:

- If you were an applicant in the Floodplain Easement Program, you do not need to take any action at this time. You are still an active applicant – just in the Recovery Program.
- In accordance with the Recovery Program, the acquisition process, in its entirety, will now be completed through the Town, not NRCS.

- Due to the acquisition process being handled by the Town, landowners will receive a single payment from the Town for both the structure and residual land value (the full appraisal value, minus any reductions as already communicated). Landowners will no longer receive two payments at closing – one from NRCS for the structure and one from the Town for the residual land value. NRCS will reimburse the Town for the cost of all closings. Landowners were previously notified of the applicable insurance compensation review and necessary reductions via an enclosure with the Letter of Intent to Continue.
- Property title will be cleared based on less restrictive Town standards and regulations, not federal standards and regulations.
- The project area still has to remain forever green after the demolition phase. This will now be accomplished by the Town obtaining deed restrictions instead of NRCS obtaining federal conservation easements.
- The buy-out is still open to new applicants in the existing project area – both new homeowners and those who previously did not apply.
- Instead of submitting an application to NRCS, an application must be submitted to the Town. A waiver from NRCS for the application to be accepted is no longer required.

Again, the transition from the Floodplain Easement Program to the Recovery Program does not change your status in the program, eligibility for a buy-out or anything that has been completed to date. The Town and NRCS are trying to shorten the time it will take to schedule closings.

The early April rainstorm is a strong reminder of why participation in the buy-out is strongly encouraged. While on-going mitigation projects are reducing the frequency and impacts of flooding along the lower Sauquoit Creek, the threat of flooding in the designated buy-out area will always exist. That is why the buy-out, being funded by NRCS and managed by the Town, is being offered and continues to move forward.

If you are not an active applicant in the buy-out but would like to apply, please email Maggie Reilly, buy-out program manager for the Town, at [Margaret.Reilly@ramboll.com](mailto:Margaret.Reilly@ramboll.com). We hope to be able to share an updated tentative timeline with everyone in the near future.

In closing, the Town and NRCS will not stop working until all those who have suffered from the horrific effects of repetitive flooding and have requested assistance are successfully bought out. Thank you for your continued patience as we work to complete the largest on-going buy-out program in New York State.

Sincerely,



Blake Glover  
NRCS State Conservationist



Shaun Kaleta  
Town of Whitestown Supervisor