

Flood Response: Repairing and Minimizing Damage

With effectiveness and determination, the Conservation Districts and the WVCA faced the challenging Fiscal Year 2005, which encompassed responses to four federally declared flood disasters.

The mission to provide stream restoration and emergency recovery for waterways was again essential, not only to the health of West Virginia's environment, but, to the safety of the people. During the flood events, debris and sediment caused stream blockages and hazardous debris jams threatening life and property.

The need for the first flood response of the fiscal year was caused by flooding in late May 2004 thru the beginning of June 2004. Although the flooding occurred in Fiscal Year 2004, the response continued into Fiscal Year 2005.

On June 8, 2004, the Governor's Office announced the President's approval of a Federal Disaster Declaration for 24 West Virginia counties. Of those 24 counties, 12 counties were eligible for the Public Assistance Program, which helps government agencies cover the cost of infrastructure repair.

Under the standard state FEMA agreement, the state of West Virginia was responsible for twenty-five percent of eligible Public Assistance Program project costs.

The second emergency response was implemented in late July through early August. The corresponding Federal Disaster Declaration was announced on August 6, 2004.

The third disaster was of a severe enough magnitude that it will probably be remembered for many years to come by citizens and government agencies. Causing the worst flooding in Northern West Virginia in about 40 years, the storm remnant of Hurricane Ivan hit 22 counties.

The Federal Disaster Declaration covering the damage caused by the storm remnants of Hurricane Ivan was announced September 20, 2004. Federal Public Assistance was available for 22 counties. More than \$700,000 was expended to remove stream debris blockages and to stabilize stream banks.



This contractor at Pigeon Creek worked quickly to remove a hazardous stream debris blockage near a railroad trestle at Belo in Mingo County in August 2004.