

HUNGRY CANYONS ALLIANCE

Spring 2007 Floods

Eighteen (18) western Iowa counties were declared eligible for federal disaster assistance due to severe rains in May which caused flooding and stream channel damage, endangering or destroying county infrastructure. This was the worst flood to hit western Iowa since 1993. The damage due to flooding was exacerbated by the highly erodible loess soils found throughout the counties.

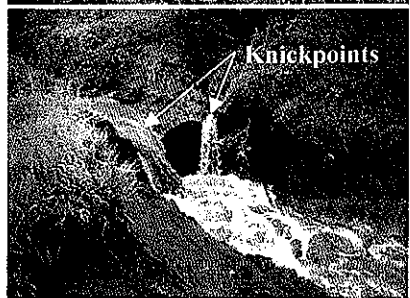
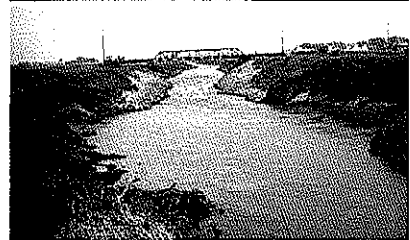
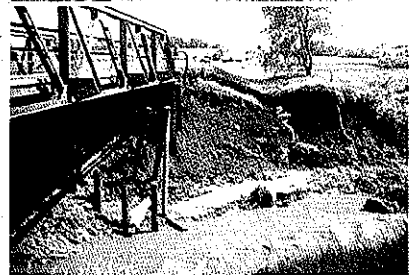
FEMA, NRCS, the Hungry Canyons Alliance, and the counties have all seen evidence that grade control structures have directly reduced flood damage costs and FEMA/EWP claims, as shown in numerous instances following the flooding in May. The vast majority of grade control structures were undamaged, and infrastructure protected by grade control structures had no damage. A small proportion of these grade control structures also suffered damages during the flooding, however, the damages to these structures are minimal compared to the total loss of our bridges that may have resulted without these grade control structures.

The Need for Additional HCA Funding

While the federal disaster declaration provided funding for repairs of damage to a large portion of our needs through FEMA, the scope of this help is limited to 1) within the right-of-way of our county roads and highways, 2) can only return the damaged components to pre-storm conditions, and 3) did not provide funding for the construction of new grade control structures. Because of this, western Iowa counties requested federal funding for the repair of damages, and to build new grade control structures to protect county infrastructure, by submitting over 200 damage survey reports totaling nearly \$8,000,000 in damages to the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program of the USDA-NRCS.

However, the federal government has not appropriated any funds to the EWP program, leaving the Hungry Canyons Alliance (HCA) as the only entity with any funds to help the counties through this time of crisis. The HCA program can 1) address damages outside of the right-of-way, 2) if need be, renovate a site beyond the pre-storm conditions, such as when an existing erosion control site has not adequately solved the erosion problem but new techniques have since been learned to enhance performance of the original erosion control design, and 3) provide funding for the construction of new grade control structures.

For FY2008, the HCA was appropriated \$400,000 in state and \$858,000 in federal funding. To address the immediate need to repair \$8,000,000 in damages, the HCA will need a significant increase in state and federal funding for FY2009. While the storm occurred in spring 2007, there is still an immediate need for HCA funding. Please consider increasing the HCA's state appropriation for FY2009 to at least \$1 million.



Examples of damages caused during May 2007 floods. 1) Scour on downstream side of over-topped roadway, 2) failed bridge embankment, 3) scour downstream from weir structure built without a stilling basin, 4) loss of all riprap bank protection adjacent to older, ungrouted EWP weir structure, 5) knickpoint during May 2007 floods, that migrated 314 feet upstream by December 2007 eroding approximately 5,000 tons of sediment.