



NEWS RELEASE

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Northeastern Colorado Watershed Project Receives \$2.5 Million in Stimulus Funding

As a result of President Obama's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack recently announced over \$3.6 million in assistance to improve water quality, increase water supply, decrease soil erosion, and improve fish and wildlife habitat in rural communities of Colorado. A total of five Colorado watershed projects were approved for funding, including the Beaver Creek Watershed Project located in the northeastern part of the State.

The Beaver Creek project encompasses nearly 83,000 acres in both Morgan and Washington counties with nearly 300 farms. The project received \$2.5 million and is designed to reduce soil erosion, protect the South Platte River, as well as enhance wildlife.

"Water is the lifeblood of Colorado and the West," said Congresswoman Betsy Markey. *"It sustains our farms, our families and our communities. It is critical to the future of our state and our country that we continue to ensure safe, clean and reliable water for Colorado, and this funding from the Economic Recovery Package will help do just that."*

"We are very pleased to have not just the Beaver Creek project receive funding," states Allen Green, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist, Lakewood, CO. *"...but all of our submitted projects were funded. They have been in the works in varying stages within the last five to 10 years and then funding came to a halt. It is good to see a re-emphasis on these large-scale conservation efforts."* NRCS is a federal agency within the Department of Agriculture, which manages and administers the technical and financial assistance for these watershed projects.

"President Obama is committed to improving water quality, creating more dependable water supplies, and decreasing soil erosion; and this funding will make a big difference in the lives of the people who live in these rural communities," Vilsack said.

In addition to the natural resource concerns these funds will help address, the USDA is directing technical and financial assistance available through ARRA funding toward projects that are ready to begin and that will relieve stress on local economies through the creation of over 1,400 jobs.

The funding for the Beaver Creek Project will create 45 land treatment contracts with mostly family-owned farms. Many of these contracts will contain the installation of various conservation management practices as well as structures which require labor to install and/or implement.

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When the project is complete, the 1,200 residents as well as the floodplain along the South Platte River will be significantly impacted. Research indicates a 24% reduction in on-farm seasonal water use and a 40% reduction of irrigation-induced erosion from the 27,000 acres of irrigated crop land.

There will also be a significant reduction of nitrates, nutrients, sediment and salts leached into surface and groundwater sources within the watershed, as well as a 50% improvement in the condition of fish and wildlife habitat. This increased sustainability of irrigated agricultural activities will benefit the local economy by nearly \$375,000 annually.

NRCS partners in conjunction with the Morgan Conservation District, the Washington Conservation District, and the Colorado State Conservation Board to successfully implement and complete this project. For additional information about the Beaver Creek Watershed Projects, please contact C.W. Scott, NRCS District Conservationist, Ft. Morgan, Colorado by calling 970-867-8568.

Funding provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 is part of the Obama Administration's plans to modernize the nation's infrastructure, jumpstart the economy and create jobs. For more information on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, visit www.recovery.gov.

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