



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA Announces Over \$50 Million in Grants to Protect Natural Resources

COLORADO, April 13, 2009 —Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently announced that up to \$52.4 million in financial assistance is available for competitive grants to protect the nation's natural resources through the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI). **Proposals are being accepted until April 23, 2009. Details about the CCPI Request for Proposals and public comment period can be viewed at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/>.**

"The 2008 Farm Bill contains legislation to increase opportunity for partnerships to help address our nation's more pressing natural resources concerns," states Dollie Gonzales, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Resource Conservationist, Lakewood, CO. *"CCPI is just one of the grant opportunities available offered through NRCS."* CCPI is a voluntary initiative, administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that allows landowners and operators of agricultural and non-industrial private forest lands to use selected conservation programs and resources from eligible partners to put conservation on the land.

Under this program, NRCS enters into multi-year agreements with eligible partners that want to enhance conservation on agricultural and non-industrial private forest lands. Partners include federally recognized American Indian tribes, state and local units of governments, producer associations, farmer cooperatives, colleges and universities and non-governmental organizations with a history of working closely with producers. Individual producers cannot submit a partner proposal. Producer's land must be located within an approved CCPI project area to be considered for financial assistance through CCPI. In fiscal year 2009, producers can apply for financial assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program

In addition to providing more avenues and funding to traditional entities to help address natural resource concerns, the new Farm Bill also, provides for expanded opportunities to work with socially disadvantaged, beginning or limited resource farmers and ranchers as they work to enhance conservation outcomes on agricultural lands and private non-industrial forest lands. As a result, USDA has allocated \$5.8 million in financial assistance for multi-state and national projects through CCPI.

Projects are being accepted on a multi-state and national as well as on a state by state basis. **Multi-state and national projects must be submitted to** the Chief, USDA-NRCS National Office in Washington, D.C. by April 23, 2009. **Colorado Proposals must be submitted by April 23, 2009 to:**

USDA NRCS
655 Parfet Street - RM E200C
Lakewood, CO 80215
c/o Allen Green, NRCS State Conservationist
Dollie Gonzales, NRCS Resource Conservationist

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The information also can be obtained at the NRCS Web site at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farbill/2008/index.html> and at the U.S. government regulation Web site <http://www.regulations.gov/search/index.jsp>. For additional information about CCPI, go to <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/ccpi/>.

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