



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Natural Resources Conservation Service
655 Parfet Street, Room E200C Lakewood, Colorado 80215
Phone (720) 544-2808 • Fax (720) 544-2965 • www.co.nrcs.usda.gov

Petra Barnes Walker, Public Information Officer
petra.barneswalker@co.usda.gov 720-544-2808

Colorado Receives Nearly \$3.6 Million in Stimulus Funding for Watershed Assistance

COLORADO, April 21, 2009 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently announced that the USDA will be providing \$84.8 million to nationwide to improve water quality, increase water supply, decrease soil erosion, and improve fish and wildlife habitat in rural communities as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. Colorado is one of 20 states receiving recovery act funding. Colorado's allocation is being provided for five watershed projects totaling some \$3.6 million.

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 jobs this money will create will give communities that have been hard-hit by the economic downturn a boost to help them recover in the short-term. And restoring rural watersheds will help protect and strengthen our state's farming and ranching communities for the long-term," states Senator Mark Udall.

ARRA funds will be used to develop conservation measures such as planting vegetative cover and creating shallow water ponds to improve wildlife habitat, improving irrigation efficiency and conserving water, installing filter strips and soil erosion control practices, flood-proofing homes and enhancing stream corridor and floodplain function, and constructing small flood-control dams.

"With this funding, we will help ensure that farmers and ranchers across eastern Colorado will have cleaner and more dependable water supplies – whether these rivers and reservoirs supply drinking water, or support recreation, agriculture, and wildlife," Senator Udall goes on to say.

Other major benefits include improved community safety and health, flood mitigation, sediment control, and enhanced fish and wildlife habitat.

-more-

Helping People Help the Land

An Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider

"For example," Vilsack said, "... the Beaver Creek (Colorado) Watershed project will develop 45 land-treatment contracts with family-owned farms, resulting in significant water quality improvement, water conservation, and enhancement of scarce wildlife habitat."

The five projects funded in Colorado include the Colorado Beaver Creek, the Highline Breaks, the Holbrook Lake Ditch, the Limestone-Graveyard Creeks, and the Trinidad Lake North watershed projects. Among the numerous benefits of each project, upon completion more than 14,000 residents within the watersheds and some 180,000 visitors will benefit from the conservation of 30,000 acre-feet of water, irrigation system improvements on 94,000 acres of cropland, the reduction of 259,000 tons of erosion per year, as well as the reduction of more than 90,000 tons of salt and sediment being transported into the Arkansas River each year.

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.

To learn more about your eligibility for USDA projects underway through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, go to www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome.

-end-