FY 2012 Explanatory Notes
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Table of Contents

	Page
Purpose Statement	25-1
Statement of Available Funds and Staff Years	25-16
Permanent Positions by Grade and Staff Years	25-18
Size, Composition and Cost of Motor Vehicle Fleet	25-19
Conservation Operations:	
Appropriation Language	25-21
Lead-off Tabular Statement	25-22
Project Statement	25-23
Justifications	25-24
Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years	25-28
Classification by Objects	25-30
User Fee Proposed Legislation	25-31
Status of Program	25g-1
Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations:	
Lead-off Tabular Statement	25-32
Project Statement	25-32
Justifications	25-34
Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years	25-35
Classification by Objects	25-37
Recovery Act	25-38
Status of Program	25g-24
Watershed Rehabilitation Program:	
Lead-off Tabular Statement	25-41
Project Statement	25-41
Justifications	25-42
Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years	25-42
Classification by Objects	25-43
Recovery Act	25-44
Status of Program	25g-33
Resource Conservation and Development:	
Lead-off Tabular Statement	25-46
Project Statement	25-46
Justifications	25-47
Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years	25-48
Classification by Objects	25-49
Status of Program	25g-37
Healthy Forests Reserve Program:	
Project Statement	25-50
Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years	25-50
Classification by Objects	25-51
Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008:	
Lead-off Tabular Statement	25-52
Project Statement	25-52
Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years	25-54
Status of Program	25g-39
Summary of Budget and Performance	
Statement of Department Goals and Objectives	25-56
Key Performance Outcomes and Measures	25-71
Full Cost by Secretary's Strategic Priorities	25-81

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
Purpose Statement

The formation of the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) marked the beginning of the Federal government's enduring commitment to conserving natural resources on private lands. Originally established by Congress in 1935, the agency, then known as the Soil Conservation Service, was later renamed the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) pursuant to Public Law 103-354, the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6962). From the beginning, the agency brought a national focus to the emerging resource issues of the Dust Bowl era: prevention of wind and water erosion. Desperate to retain its productive Midwest soils, the Nation turned to SCS for technical guidance and advice on minimizing the impacts of the Dust Bowl. Although the Dust Bowl has passed, that relationship between landowner and the agency remains.

Over the last 75 years, the agency expanded its services to become a conservation leader for all natural resources: soil, water, air, plants, and animals. Now, as NRCS, its primary focus is to ensure that private lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to environmental challenges, like climate change.

Seventy percent of the land in the United States is privately owned, making stewardship by private landowners and land managers absolutely critical to the health of our Nation's environment. These are the people who make day-to-day decisions about natural resource use and management on non-Federal lands, and NRCS offers them the technology, technical and financial assistance needed to benefit the resources, result in productive lands, and to maintain healthy ecosystems.

Science and technology are critical to good conservation. NRCS experts from many disciplines come together to help landowners conserve natural resources in efficient, smart and sustainable ways. Whether developed in a laboratory or on the land, NRCS science and technology helps landowners make the right decisions for every natural resource. The method by which NRCS provides this assistance is its Conservation Delivery System.

The NRCS Conservation Delivery system is based on providing services directly to the landowner or land manager in cooperation with conservation districts. Conservation districts are units of local government created by State law and which exist in every county and territory of the United States. The districts are tasked with providing guidance to the agency on local resource concerns and serving as the voice of the local community on resource issues.

NRCS also works in partnership with State and local agencies, locally elected or appointed farmer committees, Federal agencies, Tribal governments, and private sector organizations to encourage cooperation and facilitate leveraging of the financial and technical resources these groups can offer. By bringing together those groups which have a common and vested interest in the local landscape, community, or watershed, NRCS is able to facilitate collaboration between groups which will support sustainable agriculture and maintain natural resource quality.

Under this umbrella of agency mission and local cooperation, NRCS employees provide assistance directly to the landowner or land manager to help them understand the natural processes that shape their environment, how conservation measures can improve the quality of that environment, and what conservation measures will work best on their land. Employees provide these services directly to the customer through field offices at USDA Service Centers in nearly every county and territory of the United States. NRCS employees' understanding of local resource concerns and challenges result in conservation solutions that last. ***In the words of the first NRCS Chief, Hugh Hammond Bennett – "If we take care of the land, it will take care of us."***

Conservation Operations is authorized by the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of 1935, P.L. 74-46 (16 U.S.C. 590a-590f) and the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977, (16 U.S.C. 2001-2009). The purpose of Conservation Operations is to provide technical assistance supported by science-based technology and tools that help people conserve, maintain, and improve the Nation's natural resources. Conservation Operations has four major program components: Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA); Soil Survey; Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting (SSWSF); and Plant Materials Centers (PMCs).

Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) Program. The CTA Program has a long history of serving as NRCS's base conservation planning program, helping to develop and deliver conservation technologies and practices to private landowners, conservation districts, Tribes, and other organizations.

Through the CTA Program, NRCS helps land managers develop comprehensive conservation plans that include actions to reduce soil loss from erosion; address soil, water quality, water conservation, air quality, and agricultural waste management concerns; reduce potential damage caused by excess water and sedimentation or drought; enhance the quality of fish and wildlife habitat; improve the long-term sustainability of all lands, including cropland, forestland, grazing lands, coastal lands, and developed or developing lands; and facilitate changes in land use as needed for natural resource protection and sustainability.

Since its inception, CTA has afforded the agency the infrastructure and technology needed to proactively address national conservation priorities that have significant impacts on resource related issues while maintaining sustainable productive agriculture. At the same time, CTA provides the flexibility required to be responsive to national priorities and ever evolving conservation technology. The need to maintain technical capacity at the field level is imperative in developing and delivering the needed conservation assistance to landowners on privately owned land.

Specific objectives of CTA are to:

- Provide conservation technical assistance to individuals or groups of decision makers, communities, conservation districts, units of State and local government, Tribes, and others to voluntarily conserve, maintain, and improve natural resources;
- Provide collaborative community, watershed, and area-wide technical assistance with units of government so they can develop and implement resource management plans that conserve, maintain and improve our natural resources at appropriate scales;
- Provide conservation technical assistance to agricultural producers to comply with the Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland (Swampbuster) Conservation Compliance Provisions of the 1985 Food Security Act, as amended by past and future Farm Bills;
- Provide conservation technical assistance to aid private landowners in complying with other Federal, State, Tribal, and local environmental regulations and related requirements, and prepare them to become eligible to participate in other Federal, State, and local conservation programs;
- Provide soil information and interpretation to individuals or groups of decision-makers; communities, States, and others to aid sound decision making in the wise use and management of soil resources;
- Collect, analyze, interpret, display, and disseminate information about the status, condition, and trends of soil, water, and related natural resources so people can make informed decisions for natural resource use and management;
- Assess the effects of conservation practices and systems on the condition of natural resources; and
- Develop, adapt, and transfer effective science-based technologies and tools for assessment, management, and conservation of natural resources.

Soil Survey. NRCS Soil Survey program provides the public with information on the properties, capabilities and conservation treatment needs of their soils through soil surveys. Based on scientific analysis and classification of the soils, soil surveys include maps and interpretations with explanatory

information for a county or designated area. NRCS uses soil surveys to help people make land use decisions that take into consideration various soil characteristics and capabilities.

Soil surveys have been completed for approximately 92 percent of the United States and its territories. It is the goal of NRCS to have soils surveyed on all private lands and to make that information available to the public. NRCS conducts soil surveys cooperatively with other Federal agencies; Land Grant Universities, State agencies, Tribal, and local governments. The major NRCS objectives of the National Cooperative Soil Survey (NCSS) Program are to:

- Inventory and map the soil resource on all lands of the United States;
- Keep soil surveys relevant to meet emerging and ever-changing needs;
- Interpret the data and make soil survey information available to meet public needs;
- Promote and provide technical assistance in the use of soil survey information; and
- Lead the National Cooperative Soil Survey Program.

In addition to providing soil survey data to the public, NRCS also maintains a National Soil Survey Center (NSSC) that provides information regarding the effective application of soil science that helps make good land management possible. The Center develops national soil policy, technical guidance, procedures and standards. It conducts soil investigations, operates a soil survey laboratory, develops handbooks and manuals, provides training, develops and maintains soil survey data systems; plans regional work conferences, and serves as liaison to the NCSS Regional Agriculture Experiment Station Soil Survey Committee. Soil survey is the foundation of resource planning by land-users and for policy making for Federal, State, county, and local community programs.

Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasts (SSWSF). The SSWSF Program collects high elevation snow data in the Western United States in order to provide land managers and users with snowpack data and water supply forecasts. The objectives of the program are to:

- Provide reliable, accurate and timely forecasts of surface water supply to water managers and water users in the West;
- Efficiently obtain, manage, and disseminate high quality data and information on snow, water, climate, and hydrologic conditions; and
- Provide climate data to support NRCS conservation planning tools.

NRCS field staff collects and analyze data on snow depth, snow water equivalent, and other climate parameters at nearly 1,800 remote mountain sites. This data is collected either by means of standardized sampling devices or by means of “snow pillows” referred to as SNOTEL sites which capture and record the data electronically. Approximately 813 of the SNOTEL data collection sites are currently automated for extracting data remotely instead of on-site. The program is actively transitioning to a fully automated system which provides near-real time data available on the internet.

In addition to the high elevation data collection, the Soil Climate Analysis Network (SCAN) provides similar climate information as well as soil moisture and temperature at lower elevations and consists of 183 sites in 40 States across the United States. Together the SNOTEL and SCAN networks provide valuable data for the entire Nation.

The collected data is used to provide estimates of annual water availability, spring runoff, and summer stream flows. Climate change researchers have increasingly accessed the data for evaluating trends in the Western United States. Water supply forecasts are used by individuals, Tribes, organizations, and government agencies when making decisions about agricultural production, hydroelectric power generation, fish and wildlife management, municipal and industrial water supply, reservoir managements, urban development, flood control, recreation, and water quality management. The National Weather Service uses water supply forecasts in their river forecasting function for potential flooding risks. Reports on the snowpack characteristics are used by the ski industry, transportation departments and others to plan their seasonal work in mountain areas.

Plant Material Centers. The Plant Materials Centers (PMCs) identify, test, and evaluate the performance of plants and plant technologies to solve natural resource problems and improve the utilization of natural resources, including reducing soil erosion, restoring wetland, improving water quality, improving wildlife habitat (including pollinators), protecting streambank and riparian areas, stabilizing coastal dunes, producing biomass, improving air quality, and addressing other conservation treatment needs. The conservation plant materials released by PMCs help restore the environment to a healthy condition after natural disasters and human induced disturbances. The technologies evaluated and developed help improve the production, establishment, and management of plants used in conservation systems. Release of new plants by PMCs to the private sector helps stimulate the national economy and increase the seed and plants necessary to implement Farm Bill conservation programs. Commercial seed and plant growers are responsible for the large-scale increase needed to meet these user needs. It is estimated that commercial sales of the 500 most in-demand plants generate over $100 million a year in revenue for the private sector. In addition to new plants, PMCs prepare technical documents and conduct trainings. There are over 2,000 documents available to conservationists and the public from the Web (http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov) describing how to select and use plants for conserving or improving natural resources. The work at the 27 PMCs is carried out cooperatively with State and Federal agencies, universities, Tribes, commercial businesses, and seed and nursery associations. PMC activities directly benefit private landowners as well as Federal and State land managing agencies.

Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations includes Watershed Operations authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1944 (P.L. 78-534) and Small Watershed authorized by (P.L. 83-566; 16 U.S.C. 1001-1008), as amended.

Through these programs, NRCS cooperates with State and local agencies, Tribal governments, and other Federal agencies to prevent damage caused by erosion, floodwater, and sediment, to further the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water, and advance the conservation and utilization of land. The Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program is available nationwide to protect and improve watersheds up to 250,000 acres in size (small watersheds). Currently, there are approximately 300 active small watershed projects throughout the country. The Flood Control Act of 1944 is available only in areas authorized by Congress; these areas cover about 38 million acres in 11 States.

Objectives of the program are to provide technical and financial assistance to install watershed improvement measures to reduce flood, sedimentation, and erosion damage; improve the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water; and advance the conservation and proper utilization of land in authorized watersheds.

Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program is authorized by Section 216, P.L. 81-516, (33 U.S.C. 701b-1) and Sections 403-405, P.L. 95-334 (16 U.S.C. 2203-2205). The Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 amended Section 403 of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-334) (16 U.S.C. 2203) by including the purchase of floodplain easements as an emergency measure authorized under EWPP.

EWPP reduces hazards to life and property in watersheds damaged by severe natural events. An emergency exists when a watershed is suddenly impaired by flood, fire, drought, or other natural causes that results in life and property being endangered by flooding, erosion, sediment discharge or other associated hazards. The emergency area need not be declared a national disaster area to be eligible for assistance. Objectives of the program are to provide technical and financial assistance for disaster cleanup and subsequent rebuilding; stream corridor, wetland, and riparian area restoration; and for urban planning and site location assistance to Federal Emergency Management Agency when relocating communities out of floodplains. Local people are generally employed on a short-term basis to assist with disaster recovery. Activities include establishing quick vegetative cover on denuded land, sloping steep land, and eroding banks; opening dangerously restricted channels; repairing diversions and levees; purchasing floodplain easements; and other emergency work.

Watershed Rehabilitation Program is authorized under Section 14 of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, as amended by Section 313 of (P.L. 106-472), November 9, 2000. This program assists communities in addressing public health and safety concerns and environmental impacts of aging dams. Local communities have constructed more than 11,300 watershed dams with assistance. These dams protect America's communities and natural resources with flood control but many also provide the primary source of drinking water in the area or offer recreation and wildlife benefits. Technical and financial assistance is provided for the planning, design, and implementation of rehabilitation projects that may include upgrading or removing the dams. The program may provide up to 65 percent of the total cost of the rehabilitation projects; Federal funds cannot be used for operation and maintenance.

Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) is authorized by Section 102 of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1962 (P.L. 87-703), (7 U.S.C. 1010-1011) and Sections 1528-1538 of the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-98). Section 383 of the 1996 Farm Bill (P.L. 104-127) (16 U.S.C. 3461) extended the RC&D program authority. Section 2504 of the 2002 Farm Bill removed the sunset provisions previously placed on this program. Section 2805 - Subtitle I of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 states, "to improve the provision of technical assistance to councils under this subtitle, the Secretary shall designate for each council an individual to be the coordinator for the council." RC&D improves the capability of State and local units of government and local nonprofit organizations in rural areas to plan, develop, and carry out programs for resource conservation and development. RC&D plans address land conservation, water management, community development, or other elements including energy conservation, protection of agricultural land, or protection of fish and wildlife habitats.

RC&D is initiated and directed at the local level by volunteers. A typical RC&D area encompasses multiple communities, various units of government, Tribes, municipalities, and grassroots organizations. The program serves as a catalyst for these civic groups to share knowledge and resources collectively in order to solve common problems facing their region. RC&D councils obtain assistance from the private sector, Tribes, corporations, foundations, and all levels of government.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) was authorized by Section 1237 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-198), as amended by the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-624), the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-127), the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-171), and the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246), to assist owners in restoring and protecting wetlands. WRP is a program funded by the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and administered by the NRCS.

WRP is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. NRCS provides technical and financial support to help landowners with their wetland restoration efforts. The NRCS goal is to achieve the greatest wetland functions and values, along with optimum wildlife habitat, on every acre enrolled in the program.

Since 1992, nearly 2.4 million acres of wetlands and associated upland buffers have been enrolled in WRP through conservation easements and cost-share agreements, thereby contributing significantly to wetland protection efforts in the United States. NRCS has long-term stewardship responsibility for the acreage enrolled through conservation easements.

WRP provides landowners four methods to enroll acreage: permanent easements, 30-year easements, 30-year contracts for acreage owned by Native American Tribes and restoration cost share agreements. In addition to enrolling new easements, NRCS monitors, enforces, and manages easements enrolled in prior years. Proven elements of success to effective WRP management are strong relationships with landowners, and adequate technical expertise to carry out these functions.

The WRP restores, protects, and enhances wetlands on eligible private or Tribal lands to attain:

- Habitat for migratory birds and other wetland dependant wildlife, including threatened and endangered species and other species of special concern;
- Maintenance of plant and animal communities;
- Protection and improvement of water quality through particulate removal and filtration;
- Attenuation of water flows due to flooding;
- Recharge of groundwater;
- Protection and enhancement of open space and aesthetic quality;
- Protection of native flora and fauna contributing to the Nation's natural heritage;
- Sequestration of atmospheric carbon;
- Contribution to educational and scientific scholarships; and
- Nutrient cycling.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) was re-authorized by Section 2501 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246). EQIP advances the voluntary application of conservation practices to promote agricultural production, forest management, and environmental quality as compatible uses. Conservation practices funded through EQIP help producers improve the condition of soil, water, air, and other natural resources. The program assists owners and operators of agricultural and forest land with identification of natural resource problems and opportunities in their operation and provides assistance to solve those problems in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner.

Although EQIP specifically addresses resource concerns on working farms and ranches, implementation of the program creates benefits that extend well beyond the farm. Conservation practices funded through EQIP contracts accrue environmental benefits including improved grazing lands, improved air quality, enhanced fish and wildlife habitat, sustainable plant and soil conditions, improved water quality and quantity, and reduced soil erosion that provide important ancillary economic and social benefits.

Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) was authorized by Section 2510 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246). AWEP is a voluntary conservation program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to implement agricultural water enhancement activities on agricultural land for the purposes of conserving surface and ground water and improving water quality. Under AWEP, NRCS enters into partnership agreements with eligible entities that want to promote ground and surface water conservation or improve water quality on agricultural lands. After AWEP project areas are approved by NRCS, eligible producers may submit a program application. All agricultural producers receiving assistance through AWEP must meet the EQIP eligibility requirements and will be subject to EQIP payment limitations.

AWEP offers contracts with a minimum term that ends one year after the implementation of the last scheduled practices and a maximum term of ten years. These contracts provide financial assistance payments to implement approved conservation practices. Persons who are engaged in livestock or agricultural production or landowners who have an interest in an agricultural operation on eligible land may participate in AWEP. AWEP activities are carried out according to a plan of operations developed in conjunction with the producer that identifies the appropriate conservation practice that addresses the identified ground and surface water resource concern(s). These practices must meet NRCS technical standards adapted for local conditions.

AWEP payment rates may be up to 75 percent of the costs of certain conservation practices. Socially disadvantaged, limited resource, or beginning farmers and ranchers may be eligible for payment rates up to 90 percent. Farmers and ranchers may elect to use a certified technical service provider for technical assistance. An individual or entity may not receive, directly or indirectly, conservation payments that, in the aggregate, exceed $300,000 during the period of FY 2009 through FY 2014. Technical assistance payments do not count against this limitation. A waiver of the $300,000 limit may be requested for projects of special environmental significance that will result in significant environmental improvements as

determined by NRCS. NRCS establishes policies, priorities, and guidelines for the program and provides technical leadership and financial assistance.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) was authorized by Section 1240N of the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended by Section 2502 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act (P.L. 107-171) of the 2002 Farm Bill. WHIP was reauthorized under Section 2602 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246). WHIP provides financial and technical assistance to landowners for the protection, restoration or enhancement of upland wildlife habitat, wetland wildlife habits, threatened and endangered species, fisheries, and other types of habitat. WHIP practices are often compatible with, and beneficial to, farming and ranching enterprises. Focused efforts on habitat for fish and wildlife also contribute to more sustainable use of resources and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. By prioritizing specific geographic areas, WHIP is able to target financial and technical assistance funds to affect habitats needed for specific declining wildlife species.

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP). The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 authorized FPP as a Title XII program under the Food Security Act of 1985, authorizing NRCS to purchase conservation easements for the purpose of protecting topsoil by limiting nonagricultural uses of the land. NRCS identified the program as the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) in the 2003 Final Rule to distinguish it from the 1996 authorization and to reflect more accurately the types of land the program protects. Section 2401 of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 reauthorized FRPP and changed the purpose of the program to provide funding for the purchase of conservation easements by eligible entities. The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program protects the Nation's most valuable lands used for the production of food, feed, and fiber by providing matching funds to keep productive farm and ranch lands in agricultural uses. By enrolling in FRPP, farm and ranch lands threatened by development pressures can remain productive and sustainable. Keeping land in agricultural use reduces the amount of urban pollution (nitrogen, phosphorus and sedimentation) from land that would otherwise be converted to lawns and impervious surfaces. FRPP supports the President's America's Great Outdoors initiative by preserving the natural landscape features of non-urbanized areas and encouraging the continued agricultural uses of the lands. Eligible land includes farm or ranch lands that has prime, unique, or other productive soil, contains historical or archaeological resources, or supports the policies of a State or local farm and ranch land protection program. Working through existing farmland protection programs, NRCS partners with State and local governments, soil and water conservation districts, Tribes, and eligible nongovernmental organizations to purchase conservation easements.

Conservation Security Program (CSP) is authorized by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002. Title II, Subtitle a, Section 2001 amends the Food Security Act of 1985 by adding Chapter 2, Subchapter A, the Conservation Security Program. CSP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance for the conservation, protection, and improvement of natural resources on Tribal and private working lands. The program provides payments for producers who practice good stewardship on their agricultural lands and incentives for those who want to do more. Equitable access is provided to all producers in all 50 States, the Caribbean Area, and the Pacific Basin Area, regardless of size of operation, crops produced or geographic location. CSP is a resource concern driven program, not conservation practice driven. Section 1202(a) of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 extended CSP into 2011. The program is not reauthorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246), which stipulates that a Conservation Security Program contract may not be entered into or renewed after September 30, 2008. The Secretary shall make payments on contracts entered before September 30, 2008, using such sums as are necessary.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) was authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246), which amended the Food Security Act of 1985 to authorize the program in Fiscal Years 2009 through 2012. The purpose of CSP is to encourage producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by: (1) undertaking additional conservation activities; and (2) improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities. During the period beginning on October 1, 2008, and ending on September 30, 2017, the Secretary of Agriculture shall, to the maximum extent

practicable - "(1) enroll in the program an additional 12,769,000 acres for each fiscal year," and "(2) manage the program to achieve a national average rate of $18 per acre, which shall include the costs of all financial assistance, technical assistance, and any other expenses associated with enrollment or participation in the program."

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246). GRP assists landowners and operators in restoring and protecting grazing uses and related conservation values. The program has a 1,220,000 acre cap. The program offers several enrollment options: permanent easements, cooperative agreements, rental contracts and restoration agreements.

GRP is administered by NRCS and the Farm Service Agency (FSA). NRCS responsibilities include accepting applications, providing technical assistance to the participant, evaluating and ranking applications for rental contracts and easements, ensuring conservation treatment is in accordance to program requirements, ranking and selecting applications for funding, providing payment documentation to FSA and establishing quality assurance and control procedures to monitor land enrolled in easements or rental contracts.

FSA responsibilities include accepting applications, issuing payments, assessing penalties and liquidated damages as applicable, accepting, modifying and terminating rental contracts, landowner eligibility determinations on easement and rental contracts, acreage determination on rental contracts, maintaining GRP records and reports and enforcement of violations on rental contracts.

Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Program is authorized by Section 211 of the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-224). Subtitle I, Section 2801 (b) (2) (ii), of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246) provides for financial assistance in 16 States, as determined by the Secretary, in which participation in the Federal Crop Insurance Program is historically low. Financial assistance is provided through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). The 16 States designated by the 2008 Farm Bill to participate in the program are Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming. NRCS provides AMA financial assistance to producers to construct or improve water management structures or irrigation structures, plant trees for windbreaks, or improve water quality. The program also offers financial assistance to mitigate crop failure risks through production diversification or resource conservation practices, including soil erosion control, integrated pest management, and transition to organic farming.

The Risk Management Agency provides AMA financial assistance to producers purchasing crop insurance to reduce revenue risk. The Agricultural Marketing Service provides AMA financial assistance to program participants receiving certification or continuation of certification as an organic producer.

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program (CBWP) is authorized by Section 1240Q of the Food Security Act, as added by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110–246). Section 1240Q established the CBWP and defined the Chesapeake Bay Watershed to mean all tributaries, backwaters, and side channels, including their watersheds, draining into the Chesapeake Bay. This area includes portions of the States of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. The program gives special, but not exclusive consideration to the following river basins: Susquehanna River, Shenandoah River, Potomac River (including North and South Potomac), and the Patuxent River. The CBWP helps agricultural producers improve water quality and quantity, and restore, enhance, and preserve soil, air, and related resources in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed through the implementation of conservation practices. These conservation practices reduce soil erosion and nutrient levels in ground and surface water, improve, restore, and enhance wildlife habitat, and help address air quality and related natural resource concerns. To carry out the CBWP, NRCS may chose to use any of the following Farm Bill programs: Wetlands Reserve Program; Environmental Quality Incentives Program; Agricultural Water Enhancement Program; Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program; Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program; Conservation Security Program; Conservation Stewardship Program; Grasslands Reserve Program; Agricultural Management Assistance;

Healthy Forests Reserve Program; or Conservation Reserve Program as authorized under subtitle D, Title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985, 16 U.S.C. 3830–3839bb–5. NRCS targets watersheds where funding can have the greatest impact and, takes a comprehensive ecosystem-wide approach to restoration.

Healthy Forests Reserve Program. Title V of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (P.L. 108-148) authorized the establishment of the Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP), amended by the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008, (P.L. 110-246). HFRP assists landowners in restoring, enhancing, and protecting forest ecosystems to: promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species; improve biodiversity; and enhance carbon sequestration.

Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) is authorized by Section 2707 of the Food Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246), which establishes CCPI by amending Section 1243 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3843). Under CCPI, a voluntary conservation initiative, NRCS enters into multi-year partnership agreements with eligible entities that want to enhance conservation outcomes on agricultural and nonindustrial private forest lands. The 2008 Farm Bill Act requires six percent of the funds for EQIP and WHIP and six percent of the allowed acres for the CSP programs be reserved for support of producer approved contracts. The intent of CCPI is to leverage resources of certain Federal government programs along with services and resources of non-Federal partners to implement natural resource conservation practices.

Programmatic and Landscape Conservation Initiatives
In order to address critical, regionally important conservation needs, NRCS and its partners have established programmatic and landscape-scale initiatives to support voluntary conservation on private lands. NRCS technical assistance is most often provided through its CTA Program. NRCS has targeted funding to support the initiatives through a variety of 2008 Farm Bill Programs including: EQIP, WHIP, WRP, CIG, CCPI, and the AWEP, Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP). Financial support may also come from partners.

Each initiative is intended to raise awareness of a specific resource concern or opportunity, stimulate interest and commitment for voluntary action, and focus funding in order to optimize conservation results. By coordinating NRCS's efforts with other Federal agencies, state and local governments, and other groups, efficiency and effectiveness are optimized; additional resources are generated from partners to expand capacity and accelerate action; and mutual support is established for core conservation practices/systems that benefit the watershed, ecosystem, or species of concern. Initiatives are often derived from Congressional actions, interagency agreements, agency or Departmental directives, input from State or local workgroups or committees, or a combination of these sources. NRCS continues to assess the environmental outcomes from these landscape conservation initiatives.

In FY 2010, the following landscape initiatives of national significance were implemented. Please see the above description of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program for a summary of that initiative.

Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI). This initiative focuses on protecting and conserving Sage Grouse habitat in California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. The objective is to alleviate or reduce threats to Sage Grouse habitat and facilitate the sustainability of working ranches. SGI targets conservation delivery within high Sage-Grouse abundance centers or 'core areas' to help maintain large and intact grazing lands rather than provide palliative care to small and declining populations. This new conservation approach enables NRCS to ensure that enough of the right conservation practices are implemented in the right landscapes to expect a positive Sage-Grouse population-level response. To further strengthen this initiative, NRCS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service completed the first-ever Endangered Species Act (ESA) conference report in which NRCS identified a suite of 40 conservation practices that are beneficial to Sage-Grouse. Landowners benefit from the conference report by knowing that, if Sage-Grouse are listed as threatened or endangered under ESA, they have the assurance that they can continue ranching and operating their businesses and still be within full compliance under the Act. Conservation practices were funded through EQIP, WHIP and CIG; and

NRCS obligated $18.5 million in program contracts on approximately 650,000 acres in FY 2010. Through these contracts, landowners and managers were able to protect and improve Sage Grouse habitat through the removal of 180 miles of high risk fence near breeding sites. Fence removal permits movement of Sage Grouse and reduces death due to collisions with fences. Grazing systems were improved on 640,000 acres in order to reduce competition for forage and minimize livestock disturbance of nests and strutting grounds. To further the recovery of Sage Grouse habitat, conifers that had encroached in the habitat were removed on 40,000 acres and 11,000 acres of burned rangeland were revegetated.

Longleaf Pine Initiative. Longleaf Pine forests once covered more than 90 million acres in the southeastern United States, serving as one of the most diverse ecosystems outside of the tropics. Today only 3.4 million acres remain and provide critical habitat for 29 threatened and endangered species. The Longleaf Pine ecosystem restoration initiative includes portions of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. The objective is to protect and restore Longleaf Pine forest ecosystems in these States and minimize the risk of fire. In FY 2010, NRCS was able to obligate $4.65 million in WHIP contracts covering 33,012 acres to improve forest health conditions. Through WHIP over 1.9 million feet of firebreaks were also planned and when installed will help protect Longleaf Pine ecosystems from fire.

Bay-Delta Initiative. The Bay-Delta Initiative covers important estuary ecosystems within California's Sacramento/San Joaquin River Delta and the San Francisco Bay Estuary (Bay-Delta). The Bay-Delta supplies water for 22 million people, and supports a $28 billion/year agriculture industry in California. In response to the Administration's Interim Federal Action Plan, NRCS has made the Bay-Delta a nationally recognized conservation initiative based on a Federal/State partnership in support of balancing water supply and ecosystem restoration in the Central Valley. NRCS supports this initiative through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Floodplain Easement Program, AWEP, CCPI, CIG, CSP, EQIP, WHIP, and WRP. In FY 2010, NRCS committed approximately $80 million in the Bay-Delta ecosystem in contracts on private lands covering over 922,000 acres to improve irrigation efficiency. Of these funds, $3.8 million was provided in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Floodplain Easement Program.

Lesser Prairie Chicken Initiative. Lesser prairie chickens can be found in Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. Their populations have declined dramatically during the past several decades; as with the other prairie grouse species, the reason for the decline is a loss of native prairie, habitat fragmentation, and degradation of habitat on both private and public lands. As a consequence of the population decline, the lesser prairie chicken is a candidate for Federal listing as a threatened or endangered species; listing would negatively impact rural economies. By working with private landowners to voluntarily protect and restore native rangeland habitat for the lesser prairie chicken through prescribed grazing, upland wildlife habitat management and prescribed burning and brush management, NRCS hopes to reduce the need for listing. In FY 2010, NRCS obligated $8.3 million in EQIP and WHIP contracts.

Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI). The MRBI was established in FY 2010 and covers Arkansas, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. It was established to improve the health of watersheds within the Mississippi River Basin through the reduction of nutrient runoff, restoration and enhancement of wildlife habitat, wetland restoration, and maintenance of agricultural productivity. Initiative implementation is done through CCPI, CIG, CSP, EQIP, WHIP, and WREP. In FY 2010, NRCS obligated over $28.9 million on over 113,324 acres through this initiative.

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). Great Lakes restoration became a national priority with $475 million approved through the Environmental Protection Agency for GLRI in October 2009. A taskforce of 16 Federal departments and agencies developed the Great Lakes Restoration Action Plan (FY 2010 – FY 2014) to guide restoration efforts. Initially the effort focused on six priority watersheds: Green Bay/Fox River, Grand Calumet River, Maumee River, Saginaw River, St. Louis River, and Genesee River.

The GLRI aggressively addresses five priorities: 1) clean up the most polluted areas of the Great Lakes, 2) combat invasive species, 3) protect watersheds and shorelines from run-off, 4) restore wetlands, and 5) work with strategic partners on education, evaluation and outreach. In FY 2010, NRCS received $34 million from Environmental Protection Agency. NRCS channeled this funding through a single, comprehensive signup for EQIP, WHIP, FRPP, and EWP-FPE in June 2010. Over 800 applications were received and more than $10 million were obligated on 220 contracts supporting conservation on private lands.

New England/New York Forestry Initiative (NE/NYFI). New England and New York forests cover 52 million acres including the largest intact block of temperate broadleaf forest in the country. These forests provide clean water and wildlife habitat and support rural economies in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The forests of New England and New York are also the backbone of rural economies, providing a sustainable source of renewable energy, forest products, outdoor recreation, and tourism. Eighty percent of the forest are privately owned but are in danger of disappearing as parcels decrease in size due to residential and commercial development. Income from forest products cannot keep pace with the income provided by subdivision and development. Thus, the forests are becoming more fragmented and ecosystem stability is being threatened. The NE/NYFI is designed to protect the region's forest land, ensure its sustainability, protect sources of drinking water, support rural economies, protect wildlife, and mitigate climate change. This initiative is funded under WHIP and in FY 2010 NRCS obligated over $4.6 million in WHIP funds on 48,697 acres to improve forest stand conditions.

Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative (MBHI). In order to minimize injuries from oil to birds migrating through the Gulf Coast's marshes and shorelines, NRCS launched the MBHI in FY 2010. This initiative enhances habitat on privately owned land along the migratory bird flyways in the region in order provide feeding, resting, and nesting alternatives to a variety of bird species. NRCS developed MBHI in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the regional U.S. Joint Ventures, State departments of wildlife, and private conservation organizations. The agency worked collaboratively with farmers and landowners to enhance available bird habitat in eight States along the Mississippi and Atlantic flyways: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Texas. In FY 2010, NRCS obligated approximately $40 million from WHIP, WRP, and EQIP programs for MBHI on more than 470,000 acres. NRCS has initiated a three-year effort with outside entities, including Mississippi State University, to determine the initiative's effectiveness by monitoring the number and diversity of birds that use the created habitat. Early feedback from participants indicates that a variety of birds are using the enhanced habitat, including sandpipers, blue-winged teal, mottled ducks, and many others; the initial overall progress report will be available in Spring 2011. Although the MBHI initiative was initially created in response to the oil spill, landowners are providing food at a critical time. Current drought conditions in the Gulf region combined with decades of wetland losses are resulting in fewer food resources and habitat compared with previous years. In Louisiana, where the bulk of oil landfall occurred, water levels in marshes are significantly below average.

Technical Service Provider (TSP) assistance was implemented by NRCS as authorized under Section 1242 of the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, P.L. 107-171, as amended by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. The TSP regulation is 7CFR Part 652. TSPs expand and accelerate NRCS's ability to plan and apply conservation practices that enhance, restore, or conserve the Nation's soil, water, and related natural resources on non-Federal land. TSPs assist landowners and agricultural producers in applying conservation practices on the land. They may be individuals or entities such as private businesses, nonprofit organizations, Tribes, State and local governments, or Federal agencies outside USDA. TSPs provide participants in USDA conservation programs with convenient access to technical services, quality work, and professional one-on-one technical assistance. TSPs develop conservation plans; perform selected compliance studies; plan, design, and implement conservation practices; and evaluate completed conservation practices.

Workforce Status and Location: As of September 30, 2010, NRCS had 11,102 full-time employees with permanent appointments. Of this total, 402 employees were located in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area and 11,700 employees were located outside of the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

Organizational Structure. NRCS is a line and staff organization. The line authority begins with the Chief and extends through Regional Conservationists, State Conservationists, Area Conservationists, and is finally vested with District Conservationists. Line officers are responsible for direct assistance to the public. Staff positions furnish specialized technical or administrative assistance to line officers.

There are 3,097 offices in the NRCS organization, 48 offices and centers (1.5 percent) make-up National Headquarters; 51 offices (1.7 percent) are State or trust territory offices; 2,856 (92.2 percent) are customer service offices; and 142 (4.6 percent) are support offices.

National Headquarters. NRCS assumes the departmental leadership for programs and other activities assigned by the Secretary of Agriculture, through the Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment. The Chief, Associate Chief, Regional Conservationists, and Deputy Chiefs carries out NHQ functions. The functions include: 1) planning, formulating, and directing NRCS programs, budgets, and activities; 2) developing program policy, procedures, guidelines, and standards; 3) leadership and coordination with other agencies, constituent groups, and organizations; and 4) strategic planning and developing strategic initiatives.

NHQ is responsible for the framework for national technology development and delivery within the agency. Natural resource technology is developed and delivered through the Office of the Chief and six Deputy Chief Areas containing 27 offices and divisions, 11 national centers (Agricultural Wildlife Conservation; Cartography and Geospatial; Design, Construction and Soil Mechanics; Plant Data; Soil Survey; Water Management; Water and Climate; Information Technology; Employee Development; Geospatial Development, and Agroforestry), and three National Technology Support Centers (NTSCs). NTSCs acquire and/or develop new science and technology in order to provide cutting-edge technological support and direct assistance, and to transfer technologies to States, the Pacific Islands Area, and the Caribbean Area. NTSCs also develop and maintain national technical standards and other technological procedures and references.

State Offices. These 51 offices provide program planning and direction, consistency and accountability, and administration of a comprehensive soil, water, and related resource conservation program for each State, the Pacific Islands Area including Hawaii, and the Caribbean Area. State offices also have the responsibility for the technical integrity of NRCS activities; technology transfer and training; marketing of agency programs and initiatives; and administrative operations and processing. State offices partner with other Federal and State agencies to provide solutions to State resource issues. A State Conservationist heads the NRCS organization in the State offices. In the Pacific Islands Area which includes Hawaii, and the Caribbean Area offices, a Director serves in a leadership role similar to a State Conservationist.

Customer Service Offices. Most employees provide personalized, one-on-one service from customer service centers or from more specialized offices. Together, customer service centers and specialized offices make up 2,856 offices. They help customers prevent or solve natural resource problems on their land and in their communities. Customer service center staff works side-by-side with employees of local conservation districts and State conservation agencies. The centers function as clearinghouses for natural resource information, helping people gain access to knowledge and assistance available from local, State, regional, and national sources; they are located in all States, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Micronesia, Palau, and the Marshall Islands. The specialized offices include Resource Conservation and Development offices and offices that deliver technical or financial assistance for water quality improvement.

Support Offices. The 142 support offices provide critical technical and administrative support to customer service offices. Support offices include: 1) area offices that provide administrative and technical support to

a group of service center offices (these offices are generally located in larger States); 2) project offices that are headquarters for watershed or river basin planning and construction activities; 3) soil survey offices that inventory and map the soil resource on private lands resulting in current and consistent interpretations and data sets; and 4) plant material centers that test, select, and release plants for conservation purposes in selected plant growth regions throughout the United States.

Accountability. The NRCS accountability system components are described below.

- Program/operational and administrative controls are in place and include the Accountability Tools that are both web-based and location-based. These Accountability Tools are located at www.nrcs.usda.gov and provide information on the agency's budget and performance plans;
- State Plans are designed to address quality assurance processes, quality control issues, and producer compliance activities. Plans are updated, and findings and corrective actions are reported annually;
- An Audit tracking system is in place to monitor the progress of various oversight activities by internal and external auditors;
- Compliance reviews are performed to assess conformance of customers in meeting conservation program requirements; Customer conformance is determined using compliance and conservation program contract reviews; and
- National internal management reviews occur on high-risk areas of concern in programs, operations management, financial management, human resources, civil rights and functional areas. Deficiency findings result in management actions directed toward eliminating the deficiencies. The agency conducted ten Civil Rights Reviews and five Oversight and Evaluation Reviews in FY 2010.

Strategic Plan. The NRCS Strategic Plan establishes three priorities:

1. Getting More Conservation on the Ground
2. Create a More Efficient and Effective Organization
3. Create a Climate in which Private Lands Conservation will Continue to Succeed

Completed and On-going Audits.

FY 2010 General Accounting Office (GAO) and Office of Inspector General (OIG) completed audits:

- OIG 10099-4-SF Wetlands Reserve Program Restoration Compliance (January 2006). Final report issued August 2008. Audit closed on September 12, 2009.
- OIG 10099-10-KC Homeland Security, NRCS Protection of Federal Assets (April 2002). Final report issued September 2003. Audit closed on May 21, 2010.
- OIG 50099-11-SF Crop Base Acres on Conservation Easement Lands (May 2005). Final report issued August 2007. Office of the Chief Financial Officer accepted final action for Recommendation 1 and no further reporting is necessary for this audit. The remaining recommendations are assigned to FSA. Audit closed on March 12, 2010.
- OIG 50601-10-Hq Saving the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Requires Better Coordination of Environmental and Agricultural Resources (May 2005). Final report issued October 2006. Audit closed on July 27, 2010.
- OIG 50601-18-Te Pasture, Rangeland, and Forage Pilot Program (March 2008). Final report issued September 2010. Risk Management Agency has the lead for this audit. RMA has requested NRCS to address the risk of overlapping or conflicting benefits. Follow-up conference call with RMA is scheduled for Wednesday, January 19, 2011. NRCS needs to identify what programs we have that prohibit haying and grazing and work out a way to share data with RMA/FSA to identify fraud. Audit closed on September 1, 2010.
- OIG 50703-1-DA-American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 Recipient Reporting. Audit closed on July 15, 2010. NRCS continues to comply with ARRA recipient reporting requirements.
- OIG 50801-1-TE Urban Resources Partnership Program (June 1998). Final report issued November 1999. Audit closed on October 12, 2009.

FY 2010 General Accounting Office (GAO) and Office of Inspector General (OIG) on-going audits:

- GAO 360644 USDA Funding for EQIP – USDA Conservation Programs Stakeholders Views on Participation and Coordination to Benefit Threatened and Endangered Species and Their Habits (October 2005). EQIP Allocation Process to States (GAO-06-969) final report posted September 2006. Recommendation 1 has been closed. Recommendation 2 is pending receipt and/or processing of final action documentation.
- OIG 10099-6-SF Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program-Review of Non-Governmental Organizations (May 2007). Final report issued July 2009. Recommendations 1, 2, 4-9 are pending receipt and/or processing of final action documentation. Recommendation 3 is pending litigation until cleared by the Department of Justice.
- OIG 10401-2-FM FY NRCS Financial Statements for Fiscal Year 2008 (January 2008). Final report issued November 2008. Recommendation 6 closed and the remaining 1-5, and 7-9 are pending receipt and/or processing of final action documentation. NRCS is requesting closure for Recommendation 3 and will be submitting documentation to OCFO.
- OIG 10401-3-FM NRCS Financial Statements for Fiscal Year 2009 (October 2009). Final report issued November 2009. Recommendation 7 closed and the remaining 1-6 are pending receipt and/or processing of final action documentation.
- OIG 10401-4-FM Natural Resources Conservation Service's Financial Statements for Fiscal Year 2010. Final report issued November 2010. Seven material weaknesses were identified. The Agency responses to recommendations were submitted to OIG on January 7, 2011.
- OIG 10601-1-At Flood Control Dam Rehabilitation (December 2006). Final report issued July 2009. Recommendations 3-6, and8-12 are closed. The remaining recommendations 1, 2, 7 and 13 are pending receipt and/or processing of final action documentation.
- OIG 10601-04-KC NRCS Conservation Security Program (CSP) (November 2006). Final report issued June 2009. Management decision was not reached on recommendations 6, 8, 9, 16-18, 21 and 23. Agency response was resubmitted on August 23, 2010. CSP is still awaiting management decision from OIG Auditors since August 23, 2010.
  The remaining recommendations 1-5, 7, 10-15, 19-20, and 22 are pending receipt and/or processing of final action documentation.
- OIG 10601-6-KC Emergency Disaster Assistance for the 2008 Floods-Emergency January 18, 2011. This audit is pending a final report. The overall conclusion of the audit is that the management team successfully administered the EWP Program.
- OIG 10703-1-KC (Phase I) Emergency Watershed Protection Program Floodplain Easements (April 2009). Final report issued September 8, 2010 included consolidation of two Fast Reports submitted to OIG dated August 19, 2009 and November 19, 2009. Phase 2 – State field visits are being conducted from September through December 2010.
- OIG-10703-2-KC (2) Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Operations Program (October 2009). Final report issued on September 30, 2010. This report compiles the results of two Fast Reports one dated December 16, 2009 and the other March 11, 2010. Excerpts from the agency response dated January 20, 2010 and March 25, 2010 are also incorporated into the report.
- OIG-10703-3-KC (2) Emergency Watershed Protection Program Floodplain Easements (January 2010). In progress. Provided responses to Fast Reports which will be included in the final report.

FY 2010 General Accounting Office (GAO) and Office of Inspector General (OIG) started or open audits:

- GAO 130975 – Employee and Training Programs (November 2009). Status: In progress. Survey was completed and forwarded to GAO on March 17, 2010.
- GAO 361185 – Renewable Energy Initiative (April 2010). Status: In progress.
- GAO 361216 – Chesapeake Bay Action Plan (August 2010). Status: In progress. Entrance conference held on October 12, 2010.
- GAO 361251 Nonpoint Source Water Pollution (November 2010). Status: In progress. Entrance Conference held on November 30, 2010. NRCS has been designated as the USDA lead for this audit. The Environment Protection Agency has the overall lead for this audit. GAO has requested the agency to address data related questions for the Non-Point Source Water Pollution a deadline has not been established by GAO at this time.
- GAO 450760 – OPM Work Life (March 2010). Status: In progress. A survey was completed and forwarded to GAO on March 15, 2010.
- OIG 03601-51-TE CRP Soil Rental Rates (February 2010). Status: In progress.
- OIG 10099-3-CH Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program Controls (March 2010). Status: In progress. The agency responded to a management alert and forwarded to OIG on June 21, 2010.
- OIG 10703-1-AT Rehab of Flood Control Dams (September 2010). Status: In progress. Entrance conference was held on October 25, 2010.
- OIG 10704-1-32 Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative: NRCS response to issues caused by the Deepwater Horizon/British Petroleum Oil Spill (BP), (December, 2010). Status: In progress. The entrance conference is to be held January 20, 2011.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
Available Funds and Staff-Years
2010 Actual and Estimated 2011 and 2012

Item	Actual 2010		Estimated 2011		Estimated 2012	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years
Conservation Operations	$888,629,000	6,191	$888,629,000	6,349	$898,647,000	5,861
Healthy Forests Reserve Program	-	1	-	-	-	-
Watershed & Flood Prevention Op	30,000,000	173	30,000,000	233	-	-
Recovery Act, Watersheds	-	202	-	-	-	-
Subtotal, Watersheds & Flood	30,000,000	375	30,000,000	233	-	-
Watershed Rehabilitation Program	40,161,000	82	40,161,000	71	-	-
Recovery Act, Rehabilitation	-	27	-	-	-	-
Subtotal, Water Rehabilitation	40,161,000	109	40,161,000	71	-	-
Resource Conservation & Develop	50,730,000	403	50,730,000	423	-	-
Total, Appropriated Funds	1,009,520,000	7,079	1,009,520,000	7,076	898,647,000	5,861
Carryover Funds (Available):						
Conservation Operations	34,502,394	-	44,107,543	-	-	-
Healthy Forests Reserve Program	1,195,190	-	866,035	-	-	-
Wetlands Reserve Program	2,817,287	-	2,817,287	-	-	-
Watershed & Flood Prevention Op	356,640,362	-	171,083,386	-	31,500,000	-
Recovery Act, Watersheds	170,117,932	-	-	-	-	-
Watershed Rehabilitation Program	9,946,369	-	10,352,410	-	-	-
Recovery Act, Rehabilitation	32,158,801	-	-	-	-	-
Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program	1,158,381	-	122,498	-	-	-
Healthy Forests Reserve Program (Mand.)	7,223,828	-	9,357,277	-	-	-
Colorado River Salinity	268,746	-	268,746	-	268,746	-
Water Bank Program*	745,181	-	745,181	-	745,181	-
Forestry Incentives Program	5,628,003	-	5,628,003	-	5,628,003	-
Great Plains Conservation Prog	547,594	-	547,594	-	547,594	-
Resource Conservation & Devel	2,774,795	-	2,842,680	-	-	-
Wildlife Habitat Incentives*	10,326,388	-	10,188,000	-	10,188,000	-
Total, Available Funds	1,645,571,251	7,079	1,268,446,640	7,076	947,524,524	5,861
Obligations under other USDA appropriations:						
Farm Security & Rural Investment Program	2,880,153,287	3,625	3,260,441,775	4,587	3,639,972,000	5,041
Reimbursements for technical services to:						
Emergency Conservation Program (FSA)	1,236,524	16	1,029,877	14	1,029,877	14
Soil Survey (FS)	301,550	3	189,027	2	189,027	2
Accelerate Soil Survey	603,146	6	850,622	7	850,622	7
Other Planning & Application (FSA)	65,964,028	547	129,301,986	1,168	129,301,986	1,169
PMC Operations	50,251	1	47,806	1	47,806	1
Reimbursements for other services:						
Facilities: Rent, phone, utilities, etc	9,897,883	-	8,044,826	-	8,044,826	-
Miscellaneous	279,762	-	60,064	-	60,064	-
Total, Other USDA Approp	2,958,486,431	4,198	3,399,965,983	5,779	3,779,496,208	6,234
Total, Agriculture Appropriations	4,604,057,682	11,277	4,668,412,623	12,855	4,727,020,732	12,095

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
Available Funds and Staff-Years
2010 Actual and Estimated 2011 and 2012
(Continued)

Item	Actual 2010		Estimated 2011		Estimated 2012	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years
Other Federal Funds:						
Reimbursement for technical services for:						
Soil surveys (Interior)……	-	-	-	-	-	-
Accelerate Soil Survey……	4,431,402	39	4,796,097	41	4,796,097	41
Other: planning & application……	16,349,512	67	17,047,078	85	9,727,418	41
Snow Survey & Water Forecast……	-	-	-	-	-	-
Plant Materials Center Operations……	994,464	11	934,096	10	934,096	10
EPA Great Lakes Restorations Initiative……	13,369,972	17	-	-	-	-
Bureau of Land Management……	331,579	4	362,661	5	362,661	5
Reimbursement for other services:						
Facilities: Rent, phone, utilities, etc……	16,642	-	13,861	-	13,861	-
Cartographic job work……	-	-	-	-	-	-
Proceeds of sales……	-	-	-	-	-	-
Financial assistance……	34,504,755	-	37,477,685	-	2,782,685	-
Miscellaneous……	963,885	5	838,668	5	838,668	5
Total, Other Federal Funds……	70,962,211	143	61,470,146	146	19,455,486	102
Non-Federal Funds:						
Reimbursement for technical services for:						
Planning & application……	1,088,030	5	839,110	3	788,110	3
Accelerate Soil Surveys……	714,120	5	815,749	6	815,749	6
Snow Survey & Water Forecast……	-	-	-	-	-	-
Plant Materials Center Operations……	168,738	1	160,527	1	160,527	1
Cartographic job work……	-	-	-	-	-	-
A&E Contracting……	(5,000)	-	-	-	-	-
Reimbursement for other non-Federal services:					-	-
Facilities: Rent, phone, utilities, etc……	1,195,488	-	988,052	-	988,052	-
Proceeds of sales……	-	-	-	-	-	-
Financial assistance……	1,295,975	-	2,234,340	-	-	-
Miscellaneous……	2,683,793	15	2,467,868	12	2,467,868	12
Trust funds……	712,056	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Non Federal Funds……	7,853,200	26	7,505,646	22	5,220,306	22
Total, NRCS……	4,682,873,093	11,446	4,737,388,415	13,023	4,751,696,524	12,219

*Note: Based on the FY 2012 General Provisions, carryover balances for Water Bank Program and Wildlife Habitat Incentives are scheduled to be canceled.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Permanent Positions by Grade and Staff-Year Summary

2010 Actual and Estimated 2011 and 2012

GRADE	2010			2011			2012		
	HDQ	FIELD	TOTAL	HDQ	FIELD	TOTAL	HDQ	FIELD	TOTAL
Senior Executive Service..	27	3	30	27	3	30	27	3	30
GS-15	124	62	186	132	66	198	124	62	186
GS-14	220	177	397	234	188	422	219	176	395
GS-13	117	521	638	124	554	678	117	519	636
GS-12	83	3,181	3,264	88	3,380	3,468	83	3,171	3,254
GS-11	55	2,524	2,579	58	2,682	2,740	55	2,516	2,571
GS-10	1	106	107	1	113	114	1	106	107
GS-9	41	1,658	1,699	44	1,762	1,806	41	1,653	1,694
GS-8	18	516	534	19	548	567	18	514	532
GS-7	18	1,559	1,577	19	1,656	1,674	18	1,554	1,572
GS-6	9	392	401	10	416	426	9	391	400
GS-5	1	345	346	1	367	368	1	344	345
GS-4	4	94	98	4	100	104	4	94	98
GS-3	5	18	23	5	19	24	5	18	23
GS-2	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	2	2
GS-1	0	8	8	0	8	8	0	8	8
Other Graded Positions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ungraded Positions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Permanent Positions	723	11,166	11,889	766	11,864	12,629	722	11,131	11,853
Unfilled Positions, end-of-year	321	466	787	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total, Permanent Employment, end-of-year	402	10,700	11,102	766	11,864	12,629	722	11,131	11,853
Staff-Year Estimate	450	10,996	11,446	792	12,231	13,023	743	11,476	12,219

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
Size, Composition and Cost of Motor Vehicle Fleet

As a field-based agency, NRCS has a significant number of employees who require individual transportation to visit field offices, job sites (farms and ranches), and other areas where common carrier transportation is non-existent, uneconomical, or inadequate. Because they drive on agricultural land to provide technical assistance to farmers and ranchers, and often transport large engineering and other field equipment, employees need access to pickup trucks and sport utility vehicles (SUVs). NRCS maintains a fleet of vehicles distributed among field, area, and State offices in the 50 States and the Caribbean and Pacific Basin areas; it has no vehicles in Washington, D.C. Some of the vehicles are owned by the agency, others are leased through the General Services Administration (GSA). The vehicles are assigned to an office location, and several employees use a single vehicle. Efforts are made to share vehicles with other co-located USDA agencies when feasible in order to minimize the number of vehicles at a location and maximize their use in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

To ensure that vehicles are safe and reliable, NRCS requires annual vehicle inspections per State motor vehicle regulations. Federal Management Regulation (FMR) 102-34.280 sets forth the minimum number of years or number of miles an agency must keep its vehicles before replacement. Industry standards and experience indicate that it is both economical and safe to operate vehicles beyond these minimum standards. NRCS therefore keeps its vehicles longer than the minimum set out in FMR 102-34-.280 provided they can be operated without excessive maintenance costs or substantial reduction in resale value. NRCS policy is to replace motor vehicles based on economy and safety.

Changes to the motor vehicle fleet. At the end of FY 2010, NRCS had a fleet of 11,308 vehicles, of which 1,164 were passenger vehicles (sedans and station wagons). Included in the fleet size were 402 GSA-leased vehicles, of which 117 were passenger vehicles. The total of all vehicles was 1,178 more in FY 2010 than in FY 2009. In FY 2011, NRCS anticipates a net reduction in fleet inventory of 326 vehicles, resulting from its disposing of 1,126 vehicles and acquiring 800 replacements through purchase or lease. The projected FY 2011 total is 10,982 vehicles. For FY 2012, the fleet inventory is estimated to be slightly smaller at 10,940 vehicles.

Managing the motor vehicle fleet to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In order to meet federally mandated requirements to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, NRCS purchases alternative fuel vehicles where such fuels are available and hybrid vehicles where they are not. In remote rural areas, there may be few or no alternative fuel options. In the coming year, the agency will actively encourage field offices to only purchase alternative fuel vehicles in places where there is adequate access to such fuels. Where supplies do not exist, field staff should meet the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by purchasing hybrid vehicles.

Size, Composition, and Annual Cost
(in thousands of dollars)

Fiscal Year	NRCS Motor Vehicle Fleet, by Vehicle Type and Annual Operating Cost[1]								
	Sedans & Station Wagons	Light Trucks, SUV, Vans		Medium Trucks	Heavy Trucks	Ambu-lances	Buses	Total Vehicles	Annual Operating Costs
		4X2	4X4						
2009	1,148	4,032	4,591	319	40	--	--	10,130	$11,313
Change[2]	+80	-477	+1,599	+109	+28	--	--	+1,339	-$4,563
2010	1,164	5,176	4,584	348	35	--	1	11,308	$10,845
Change[3]	+16	+1,144	-7	+29	-5	--	1	+1,178	-$468
2011	1,132	4,908	4,562	344	35	--	1	10,982	$10,845
Change	-32	-268	-22	-4	--	--	--	-326	--
2012	1,137	4,791	4,629	347	35	--	1	10,940	$10,845
Change	+5	+67	+67	+3	--	--	--	-42	--

[1] Includes both agency-owned and GSA-leased vehicles.
[2] Includes 537 vehicles replaced through GSA under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).
[3] Includes 487 vehicles replaced through GSA under ARRA.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
Conservation Operations

The estimates include appropriations language for this item as follows (new language underscored; deleted matter enclosed in brackets):

Conservation Operations

For necessary expenses for carrying out the provisions of the Act of April 27, 1935 (16 U.S.C. 590a-f), including preparation of conservation plans and establishment of measures to conserve soil and water (including farm irrigation and land drainage and such special measures for soil and water management as may be necessary to prevent floods and the siltation of reservoirs and to control agricultural related pollutants); operation of conservation plant materials centers; classification and mapping of soil; dissemination of information; acquisition of lands, water, and interests therein for use in the plant materials program by donation, exchange, or purchase at a nominal cost not to exceed $100 pursuant to the Act of August 3, 1956 (7 U.S.C. 428a); purchase and erection or alteration or improvement of permanent and temporary buildings; and operation and maintenance of aircraft, $898,647,000, to remain available until September 30, 2013: Provided, That appropriations hereunder shall be available pursuant to 7 U.S.C. 2250 for construction and improvement of buildings and public improvements at plant materials centers, except that the cost of alterations and improvements to other buildings and other public improvements shall not exceed $250,000: Provided further, That when buildings or other structures are erected on non-Federal land, that the right to use such land is obtained as provided in 7 U.S.C. 2250a.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

CONSERVATION OPERATIONS

Annualized 2011 Continuing Resolution	$888,629,000
Budget Estimate, 2012	898,647,000
Increase in Appropriation	+10,018,000

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Summary of Increases and Decreases
(On basis of appropriation)

Item of Change	2011 Estimated	Pay Costs	Program Changes	2012 Estimated
Conservation Operations:				
1. Conservation Technical Assistance	$762,707,000	--	+$19,948,000	$782,655,000
2. Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative	9,930,000	--	-9,930,000	--
3. Soil Survey	93,939,000	--	--	93,939,000
4. Snow Survey	10,965,000	--	--	10,965,000
5. Plant Materials Centers	11,088,000	--	--	11,088,000
Total Available	888,629,000	--	+10,018,000 (1)	898,647,000

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Conservation Operations

Project Statement by Program
(On basis of appropriation)

	2010 Actual		2011 Estimated		Increase	2012 Estimated	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	or Decrease	Amount	Staff Years
Conservation Operations:							
1. Technical Assistance	$762,906,000	5,274	$762,707,000	5,422	+$19,948,000	$782,655,000	5,050
2. Grazing Lands	9,930,000	78	9,930,000	78	-9,930,000	--	--
3. Soil Survey	93,939,000	676	93,939,000	679	--	93,939,000	651
4. Snow Survey	10,965,000	65	10,965,000	78	--	10,965,000	69
5. Plant Materials	11,088,000	98	11,088,000	92	--	11,088,000	91
Total, Available	888,828,000	6,191	888,629,000	6,349	+10,018,000	898,647,000	5,861
Transfer from Congressional Relations	-199,000	--					
Total, Appropriation	888,629,000	6,191					

Note: Technical Assistance includes $1 million for the National Carbon Inventory and Accounting System for Forestry and Agriculture earmark in 2010 and 2011.

Project Statement by Program
(On basis of available funds)

	2010 Actual		2011 Estimated		Increase	2012 Estimated	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	or Decrease	Amount	Staff Years
Conservation Operations:							
1. Technical Assistance	$772,080,209	5,274	$801,967,839	5,422	-$19,312,839	$782,655,000	5,050
2. Grazing Lands	9,930,000	78	9,930,000	78	-9,930,000	--	--
3. Soil Survey	95,822,309	676	97,402,543	679	-3,463,543	93,939,000	651
4. Snow Survey	10,015,637	65	12,296,232	78	-1,331,232	10,965,000	69
5. Plant Materials	11,752,598	98	11,139,929	92	-51,929	11,088,000	91
Total Direct Obligations	899,600,753	6,191	932,736,543	6,349	-34,089,543	898,647,000	5,861
Unoblig. Bal. Brought Fwd	(-52,922,718)	--	(-69,691,291)	--	(+44,107,543)	(-25,583,748)	--
Prior Year recoveries	(-22,028,787)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Unobligated Expiring Balance	(+4,941,312)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Offsetting Collections	(-37,352,168)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Reimbursements	(+45,811,356)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Change in Customer Payments	(-18,913,039)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Not Available Carried Fwd	--	--	(+25,583,748)	--	--	(+25,583,748)	--
Unobligated Bal. Carried Fwd	(+69,691,291)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Adjusted Appropriation	(888,828,000)	--	(888,629,000)	--	(+10,018,000)	(898,647,000)	--
Reimbursable Obligations:							
Conservation Tech. Assist	36,276,685	91	31,000,000	80	--	31,000,000	80
Soil Survey	6,308,626	57	6,900,000	60	--	6,900,000	60
Snow Survey	390,438	1	500,000	2	--	500,000	2
Plant Materials	1,892,066	17	1,800,000	16	--	1,800,000	16
EPA Great Lakes Restorations Initiative	943,541	9	--	--	--	--	--
Total, Reimbursable	45,811,356	175	40,200,000	158	--	40,200,000	158
Obligational Authority	945,412,109	6,366	972,936,543	6,507	-34,089,543	938,847,000	6,019

Justification of Increases and Decreases

(1) A net increase of $10,018,000 for Conservation Technical Assistance ($772,637,000 available in FY 2011):

(a) An increase of $15,000,000 and 105 staff years for the implementation of Strategic Watershed Action Teams (SWATs) that will be deployed to high priority degraded agricultural watersheds.

Conservation plans developed through Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) provide the mechanism through which landowners and managers identify conservation systems to address their natural resource needs, and make decisions about the appropriate financial assistance programs. This initiative identifies an innovative approach to address this issue.

NRCS envisions deploying SWATs consisting of five to seven conservation planning professionals, for periods of between three to five years in specified geographic location discussed below. These teams will include Soil Conservationists, technicians and specialists and will be identified based on the needed technical expertise in each watershed. Specialists may include a range specialists, engineers or biologists. The number of teams deployed for each watershed will depend on the analysis of natural resource and socioeconomic data of the region. The teams will work under the direction of the local District Conservationist in cooperation with the State and local Conservation Districts to provide a seamless cadre of field professionals.

The development and deployment of SWATs will greatly improve the environmental cost effectiveness of NRCS technical and financial assistance programs. The funds will enhance the agency's capability to strategically invest in conservation and better target the agency's financial and technical assistance programs to areas with the greatest conservation need and potential for improved environmental outcomes. Because the SWATs will provide significant planning, education, and program implementation assistance, the technical assistance teams will help ensure that NRCS programs are strategically targeted and effectively integrated on a farm and ranch as well as a watershed scales.

The goal of deploying the SWATs will be to reach every landowner in a targeted watershed eligible for NRCS programs and provide them with the technical assistance to assess their natural resource conditions and offer resource planning and program help. Emphasis in resource assessment and planning will be placed on those resource conditions that are of priority interest in the selected watershed. For instance, if a watershed has been designated a high priority for its threat to nitrogen loading, SWAT teams will emphasize high impact targeted practices for nitrogen avoidance, control and entrapment.

The total number of staff years for this initiative that could be supported by the increase in CTA funds could be as many as 105 (or approximately 20 teams). The costs would be for salary, training, equipment and relocation in years of redeployment.

Having a concentrated number of field employees in a strategic watershed will increase the number and extent of high priority conservation practices installed through financial assistance programs or by private landowner investment in a shorter period of time. Increased conservation practice adoption and implementation will result in faster environmental response and natural resource improvement.

To determine the future of this new approach, NRCS will evaluate the cost effectiveness of the SWATs. The evaluation will assess both the change in administrative performance (such as, the technical assistance cost to deliver a program, percent of farming operations participating in a watershed, and the time to plan, design, and install practices), as well as environmental performance (such as, the change in wildlife populations, water quality and quantity, and farm profitability) versus watersheds with no SWATs.

The SWATs will help NRCS work more closely and effectively with the U.S. Forest Service in that agency's efforts to also adopt a landscape-scale approach to natural resource management. This will leverage the strengths of each agency's technical skills and natural resource programs to conserve and restore forestland, grassland, and working farmland. This coordinated, strategic approach will encompass

public and private lands. Additional partnerships with other local, State, and Federal agencies, as well as private and non-profit partners, will expand the reach and success of the initiative.

During Fiscal Years 2011 and 2012, NRCS will coordinate with the U.S. Forest Service and other stakeholders and partners to identify high-priority watersheds, which may include the Bay-Delta region in California and the Upper Mississippi River Basins, in order to enhance conservation on a landscape scale across land ownerships. Smaller critical watersheds within these high-priority watersheds would be identified for the deployment of SWAT, using natural resource and socioeconomic data including:

- Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) data;
- State-level natural resource data;
- State-level strategic conservation and land management priorities; and
- Other information and priorities identified trough the NRCS State Technical Committees in cooperation with other Federal, State, and private partners.

(b) An increase of $11,330,000 and 18 staff years for streamlining and development of business models to enhance conservation delivery.

The successful delivery of conservation technical assistance is inherently a field-based activity. Since 2002, the growing administrative workload associated with expanded financial assistance programs have significantly reduced the amount of time field staff can spend in the field during the planning process. At the same time the financial assistance funding has increased, the number of NRCS staff years has declined.

To address these concerns, NRCS is implementing a Conservation Delivery Streamlining Initiative (CDSI) to: (1) make participation in USDA's conservation programs easier for customers and the delivery of programs less complex for employees; (2) increase efficiencies by streamlining and integrating processes across business lines, and (3) ensure the continued science-based delivery of technically sound conservation products and services.

To streamline the business processes required to support NRCS's conservation planning and contract development, NRCS is constructing the next generation planning tools using current mobile planning technologies that will allow NRCS staff and its clients full access to technical and programs information, maps, and natural resource information while in the field. A new web-based client gateway will allow NRCS's clients to apply for USDA programs, view their conservation plans and contracts, check their eligibility, evaluate various conservation alternatives, and request payment for completed practices 24/7. NRCS is also redesigning its business processes and initiating other strategies that will minimize the clerical burden on field technical staff. After full implementation of the Conservation Delivery Streamlining Initiative, these integrated initiatives will enable NRCS field staff to spend 65 to 80 percent of their time in the field working with clients, adding an annual value of over $90 million in technical assistance to America's producers.

The base funding initiated in FY 2010 for the Conservation Delivery Streamlining Initiative accomplished a number of major milestones that have had an immediate impact, but have also established the foundation for NRCS's streamlining efforts. These include developing a business case for the next generation streamlined business processes for conservation planning and Farm Bill cost-share programs; implementing a restructured set of financial assistance roles across all programs to strengthen financial management accountability; establishing a streamlined and simpler framework for identifying and treating natural resource concerns agency-wide; and establishing a new roadmap and framework for information technology development and delivery to support conservation assistance. In 2012, this base funding will support personnel costs to continue these foundation efforts, with a focus on finalizing the next generation process models for easement and stewardship programs; identifying and implementing short-term, low-cost process improvements with immediate impacts; streamlining Technical Service Provider processes; implementing other foundation technologies such as digital signature capability for clients; and conducting pilots for evaluating redesigned processes.

The additional funding in 2012 will be used to directly support the planning and development of the major information systems identified through the Conservation Delivery Streamlining Initiative.

More specifically, $11.3 million will be used for (1) the development, testing, and national release of a mobile planning tool that will allow NRCS field staff to access technical and programs information, maps, and natural resource information while in the field, using both wireless and "disconnected" technologies; (2) the development, testing, and national release of a single integrated Conservation Desktop application to streamline conservation assistance processes, implement automated workflow between offices, eliminate duplicate data entry by field staff, and replace a number of currently used disjointed applications; (3) the release of a web-based Client Gateway, that will allow NRCS's clients to apply for Farm Bill programs, view their conservation plans and contracts, check their eligibility, evaluate various conservation alternatives, and request payment for completed practices at their own convenience; and (4) develop and release several key science-based applications to simplify the planning process and reduce extra trips between the office and the field.

(c) An increase of $7,000,000 in Conservation Technical Assistance for NRCS Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) to enhance the assessment, targeting and comprehensive planning on the landscape in order to reduce adverse ecosystem impacts on agricultural landscapes and will result in a sustainable agricultural ecosystem.

The sustainability of agricultural landscapes is dependent on minimizing adverse impacts on these landscapes. To date, CEAP has gathered data, developed models and tools, and summarized lessons learned that can assist NRCS as it targets funding to conserve and protect natural resources while supporting the American farmers' efforts to continue providing high quality food, feed, fuel and fiber for the public. In addition to the accomplishments described above, work is needed to fully realize the benefits of the CEAP project and ensure that a fuller understanding of the effects of conservation practices results in improved outcomes for NRCS programs.

Base funding will use the knowledge gained from CEAP studies on reducing agricultural pollutants to improve environmental quality. CEAP will continue data gathering, modeling and analyses of watersheds, landscapes and other ecosystem elements not yet analyzed (e.g., grazing lands, pasture lands, additional wildlife assessments) to fill critical data gaps (e.g., pasture land management), while at the same time integrating the work done to date across NRCS activities. This integration effort will enhance NRCS's ability to effectively and efficiently deliver Farm Bill conservation programs by helping NRCS to: (1) target technical and financial assistance to areas with the greatest need and potential for conservation impact and (2) develop better field tools, guidelines, conservation practice standards and policies. Most importantly, CEAP will help improve allocation schemes, program ranking factors, and improve performance measurement.

The increase in funding will:

- Demonstrate defensible, reliable and scalable environmental outcome-based measures for HIT practice installation within priority landscapes targeted by SWATs.
- Expand pastureland data collection activities through the NRI/CEAP Grazing Land effort.
- Accelerate current rangeland modeling activities using the Rangeland Hydrology Erosion Model (RHEM) and the Wind Erosion Model (WEMO).
- Design and implement processes to automate the economic analysis of conservation expenditures and benefits.
- Create CEAP cropland lookup tables to conduct and catalog the necessary model runs to define outcomes from conservation cropping rotations and systems.
- Expand the Sage Grouse monitoring effort to four additional areas where the Sage Grouse Initiative is being implemented, and establish biological assessment frameworks for other initiative efforts including the lesser prairie-chicken, New England cottontail, and possibly other species.

- Design data collection process and survey methodology for collection of onsite wetland data/information to support NRI and CEAP reporting and modeling applications relative to wetland condition and function.

(d) An increase in Conservation Technical Assistance of $25,000,000 for Common Computing Environment (CCE) refresh.

The budget includes $25 million for NRCS to support the Department's efforts to modernize and upgrade the CCE for the Service Center Agencies (SCAs). This funding will be used to replace outdated components of the CCE, many of which have exceeded their expected life cycles, reduce system vulnerabilities to failure and improve the performance and effectiveness of the shared infrastructure. These improvements will allow the SCAs to better serve program participants with a more flexible and reliable IT infrastructure and enable the first system-wide refresh of the CCE since the infrastructure was implemented in 2000. In addition, as the components of the CCE are replaced, USDA will implement a right-sizing process whereby configuration changes will be made to better support the delivery of current and future programs. As part of this process, the Department will strive to improve system security, reduce the long term cost of infrastructure services, and improve service reliability.

(e) A decrease of $9,930,000 and 78 staff years in Conservation Technical Assistance for Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative.

The decrease terminates funding for the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI). The agency will continue to maintain and improve the management, productivity, and health of the Nation's privately owned grazing land through ongoing activities within the Conservation Technical Assistance Program, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Grasslands Reserve Program.

(f) A decrease of $38,382,000 in Conservation Technical Assistance program earmarks.

In FY 2010, Congress included over $38 million in earmarks and a General Provision in the Conservation Operations programs. This decrease in funding will eliminate Congressional earmarks in the Conservation Technical Assistance account. The savings from elimination of earmarks will be redirected to high priority program areas described above (a-d).

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Conservation Operations

Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years
2010 Actual and Estimated 2011 and 2012

	2010		2011		2012	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years
Alabama……....	$11,770,836	104	$12,191,317	107	$11,758,400	98
Alaska……...	4,445,591	34	4,604,398	35	4,440,900	32
Arizona…….	8,647,940	78	8,956,864	80	8,638,800	74
Arkansas……..	12,846,578	113	13,305,487	116	12,833,000	107
California……..……...	22,886,182	159	23,703,729	163	22,861,900	151
Colorado……..	17,013,883	153	17,621,658	157	16,995,800	145
Connecticut……..	4,370,290	24	4,526,407	25	4,365,700	23
Delaware……..	2,186,376	18	2,264,478	18	2,184,100	17
Florida……..	10,667,538	89	11,048,607	91	10,656,200	84
Georgia……..……..	16,715,846	125	17,312,974	128	16,698,100	118
Hawaii……..	9,477,656	62	9,816,219	64	9,467,600	59
Idaho……..……..	11,206,995	115	11,607,334	118	11,195,100	109
Illinois……..	17,525,225	162	18,151,266	166	17,506,600	153
Indiana……..	12,920,777	118	13,382,337	121	12,907,100	112
Iowa……..	23,129,555	213	23,955,795	218	23,105,000	202
Kansas……..	22,294,331	205	23,090,735	210	22,270,700	194
Kentucky……..	14,190,216	118	14,697,123	121	14,175,200	112
Louisiana……..	10,909,752	103	11,299,473	106	10,898,200	98
Maine……	5,101,740	46	5,283,986	47	5,096,300	44
Maryland……..	6,979,108	52	7,228,418	53	6,971,700	49
Massachusetts……..	4,381,384	29	4,537,897	30	4,376,700	27
Michigan……..	12,480,572	112	12,926,406	115	12,467,300	106
Minnesota…….	16,891,484	153	17,494,886	157	16,873,600	145
Mississippi……	16,061,629	135	16,635,387	138	16,044,600	128
Missouri……	21,388,657	197	22,152,709	202	21,366,000	186
Montana……	19,692,104	190	20,395,551	195	19,671,200	180
Nebraska……...	18,259,035	174	18,911,289	178	18,239,700	165
Nevada……..	5,338,304	38	5,529,000	39	5,332,600	36
New Hampshire……	3,367,660	26	3,487,960	27	3,364,100	25
New Jersey……...	5,238,269	41	5,425,392	42	5,232,700	39
New Mexico…….	10,266,719	98	10,633,470	101	10,255,800	93
New York…….	12,726,993	105	13,181,630	108	12,713,500	99
North Carolina……..	11,896,491	96	12,321,461	98	11,883,900	91
North Dakota……	16,893,663	149	17,497,143	153	16,875,800	141
Ohio……..	13,042,388	87	13,508,292	89	13,028,600	82

	2010		2011		2012	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years
Oklahoma……	15,937,119	160	16,506,429	164	15,920,200	151
Oregon……..	12,870,034	112	13,329,781	115	12,856,400	106
Pennsylvania……	11,727,602	94	12,146,539	96	11,715,200	89
Puerto Rico……...	4,152,104	35	4,300,427	36	4,147,700	33
Rhode Island……	2,575,558	15	2,667,563	15	2,572,800	14
South Carolina…….	8,179,342	79	8,471,527	81	8,170,700	75
South Dakota……	13,856,798	136	14,351,794	139	13,842,100	129
Tennessee…….	13,979,731	122	14,479,119	125	13,964,900	115
Texas……	48,365,407	442	50,093,130	453	48,314,100	418
Utah……..	11,014,585	79	11,408,051	81	11,002,900	75
Vermont……	4,341,139	32	4,496,214	33	4,336,500	30
Virginia……	10,514,099	80	10,889,687	82	10,503,000	76
Washington……..	12,038,512	111	12,468,555	114	12,025,700	105
West Virginia……...	8,822,103	84	9,137,249	86	8,812,700	80
Wisconsin…….	18,129,109	140	18,776,722	144	18,109,900	133
Wyoming……..	9,451,372	74	9,788,997	76	9,441,400	70
National Hdqtr……..	184,847,372	242	192,450,541	249	184,651,400	228
National Centers……...	63,014,459	361	65,265,479	370	62,947,700	342
Nat. Tech. Sup. Cent.……...	12,572,541	72	13,021,661	74	12,559,200	68
Undistributed……	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total Obligations/Est……..	899,600,753	6,191	932,736,543	6,349	898,647,000	5,861

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE
Conservation Operations

Classification by Objects
2010 Actual and Estimated 2011 and 2012

Personnel Compensation:		2010	2011	2012
Washington, D.C.		$30,441,804	$31,273,270	$28,877,000
Field		401,865,529	415,487,730	383,656,000
11	Total personnel compensation	432,307,333	446,761,000	412,533,000
12	Personnel benefits	143,465,951	148,215,000	136,855,000
13	Benefits for former personnel	273,958	287,000	269,000
	Total Pers. Comp. & Benefits	576,047,242	595,263,000	549,657,000
Other Objects:				
21	Travel	22,767,164	23,719,000	22,235,000
22	Transportation of things	4,192,389	4,362,000	4,089,000
23.1	Rent payments to GSA	--	--	--
23.2	Rental payments to others	19,971,990	20,752,000	19,454,000
23.3	Communications, utilities, and misc. charges	13,853,320	14,410,000	13,512,000
24	Printing and reproduction	1,733,797	1,803,000	1,690,000
25.1	Advisory and assistance services	--	--	--
25.2	Other services	211,974,196	221,650,543	203,775,000
25.2	Construction contracts	221,943	--	--
26	Supplies and materials	20,705,975	21,526,000	30,036,000
31	Equipment	27,343,594	28,432,000	53,432,000
32	Land and structures	153,444	157,000	148,000
41	Grants	--	--	--
42	Insurance and loans	535,334	558,000	522,000
43	Interest and dividends	100,025	104,000	97,000
44	Refunds	340	--	--
	Total other objects	323,553,511	337,473,543	348,990,000
Total, direct obligations		899,600,753	932,736,543	898,647,000
Position Data:				
Average Salary, ES positions		$160,117	$160,117	$160,117
Average Salary, GS positions		$64,202	$64,202	$64,202
Average Grade, GS positions		10	10	10

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Conservation Operations

USER FEES-PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Explanation of Proposed Legislation:

This proposal would recover approximately $22 million in FY 2012.

The Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance for the development of conservation plans and establishment of measures to conserve soil and water, including farm irrigation, flood prevention, and agricultural pollution control. The technical assistance provided to agricultural landowners and operators varies depending upon the complexity of the soil or water conservation resource concern. This proposal would initiate user fees for this service. Because these plans benefit landowners by providing them with individualized site-specific inventories and evaluations of soil, water, and other resources on their land, as well as design, layout and evaluation of over 167 potential conservation practices, USDA is proposing a fee based on the level of service provided.

This proposal recommends amending Section 590c of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of 1935 to authorize the charging of fees for particular technical assistance services. This proposal would authorize NRCS to prescribe and collect fees to cover some of the costs of providing technical assistance for completing a conservation plan for a producer or landowner. The language would provide the Secretary with the authority to waive fees for assistance provided to members of historically underserved groups such as beginning farmers or ranchers, limited resource farmers or ranchers, and socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers. Fees would not be assessed for assistance provided to USDA program participants seeking to maintain payment eligibility under Section 1212 of the Food Security Act of 1985. The legislation also establishes a special fund in the Treasury for collection of user fees, which would be authorized to be appropriated and available until expended. Estimated receipts in FY 2012 are $22 million.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION OPERATIONS ACCOUNT

STATUS OF PROGRAMS

Current Activities

Background. Conservation Operations is authorized by the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of 1935, P.L. 74-46 (16 U.S.C. 590a-590f) and the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977, (16 U.S.C. 2001-2009). The purpose of Conservation Operations is to provide technical assistance supported by science-based technology and tools that help people conserve, maintain, and improve the Nation's natural resources. Conservation Operations has four major program components: Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA); Soil Survey, Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting (SSWSF); and Plant Materials Centers (PMCs).

Funding in the Conservation Operations account provides for the development and delivery of a major portion of the products and services associated with four of the Agency's five business lines: 1) Conservation Planning and Technical Consultation, 2) Conservation Implementation, 3) Natural Resource Inventory and Assessment, and 4) Natural Resource Technology Transfer. The fifth business line (Financial Assistance) is funded primarily through other conservation programs.

Agency Strategic Plan. NRCS's conservation programs and services address all natural resource concerns. Our goal is not just a sustainable, nutritious, abundant food supply, but also thriving ecosystems that support a diversity of life. In the coming years, NRCS will continue to tackle familiar challenges like ensuring clean water, healthy soil, clean air, clean energy, climate change, and new technology.

During FY 2010, NRCS developed a strategic plan that provides the vision, direction and performance measures to achieve our mission through three priorities established by the Chief: Getting More Conservation on the Ground; Increase Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency; and Create a Climate in which Private Lands Conservation will Continue to Succeed. These priorities align with USDA Strategic Goals. The NRCS priorities/objectives address each of the USDA management initiatives. In FY 2011 the agency is developing outcome-based performance measures that reflect the effects of applied conservation practices based on available science. These performance measures will create a more transparent link between outputs and outcome.

Getting More Conservation on the Ground. NRCS prioritizes activities that protect the natural resource base for future generations, leaving as a legacy clean air and water, abundant wildlife habitat, and productive soils that can support life.

Increase Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency. Service is synonymous with who we are. Accountability to the NRCS customers and the public is the measure of the agency's organizational success which also depends on integrity at every level.

Create a Climate in which Private Lands Conservation will Continue to Succeed. The agency was founded to provide conservation planning and technical assistance to America's landowners and our reputation has been based on our skill in those areas. NRCS works closely with partners and reach out to forge new alliances to advance conservation.

NRCS's strategic plan reaffirms our continuing mission—helping the people who manage the Nation's soil and water resources to improve and maintain the productive capacity of the resource base and the quality of the environment today and for the future.

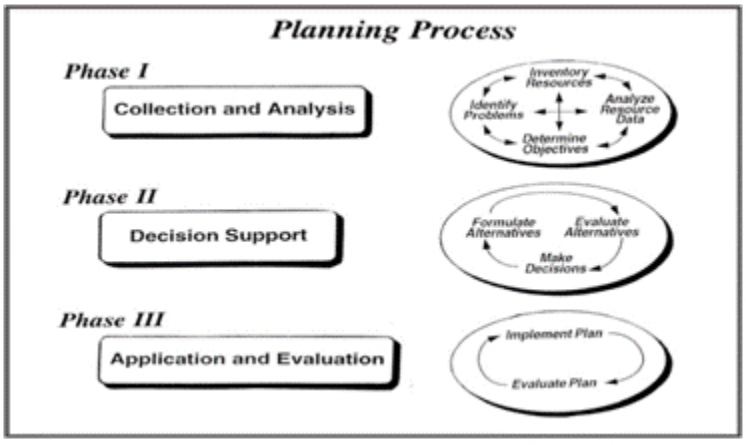
CONSERVATION TECHNCIAL ASSISTANCE

Current Activities

Program Objectives. The Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) Program provides agricultural producers and others with the knowledge and conservation tools they need to conserve, maintain, and improve the natural resources on the lands they manage. Through the program, NRCS conservation professionals and partners translate science, professional judgment, and sensitivity to land managers so they can take appropriate actions on their farms, ranches, and watersheds to conserve resources, enhance the environment, and ensure the commercial viability of agriculture.

Program Operations. Technical assistance starts with a science-based assessment—a diagnosis—of the resource concerns and opportunities on farms and ranches and in watersheds. NRCS professionals then develop the prescription—providing farmers and ranchers with the best options for addressing resource concerns and taking advantage of opportunities. Trained NRCS conservationists understand the synergies of various conservation practices and activities and can recommend the best strategies to get desired results. The prescription—or conservation plan—is turned into treatment as producers and NRCS work together to use the information gleaned from the planning process to make decisions, implement plans, and put practices in place.

Ideally, technical assistance does not stop with implementation but includes an annual checkup or reassessment to determine the effectiveness of the plan for the land manager and the environment. The checkup could lead to an adjustment to the treatment program. Technical assistance is an ongoing process of science-based assessment, action, reassessment, and adjusted action—a process sometimes referred to as adaptive management. In its broadest and best sense, science-based technical assistance is about helping producers understand how their operations affect the environment and how they can manage their operations to both make a profit and improve the environment. It connects what happens on one farm with what happens on neighboring farms so that real and measurable natural resource improvements can be made on the broader landscape. Finally, technical assistance is about innovation—developing, testing, and transferring new conservation practices and systems that better meet the needs of producers and the environment. The figure below illustrates the three phases of planning—collection and analysis, decision support, and application and evaluation.



NRCS is USDA's principal agency for providing conservation technical assistance to private landowners, conservation districts, Indian tribes, and other organizations. Through the CTA Program, NRCS helps land managers reduce soil loss from erosion; address soil, water quality, water conservation, air quality, and agricultural waste management concerns; reduce potential damage caused by excess water and sedimentation or drought; enhance the quality of fish and wildlife habitat; improve the long-term sustainability of all lands, including cropland, forestland, grazing lands, coastal lands, and developed or developing lands; and facilitate changes in land use as needed for natural resource protection and sustainability.

NRCS conservation technical assistance addresses at the local level, where public policy truly supports private action, natural resource conservation issues that are of State and National concern. The NRCS Chief establishes CTA Program national priorities and initiatives on a yearly or multi-year basis in order to focus agency resources on specific program objectives. States may establish additional priorities and initiatives for the CTA Program. NRCS has a full array of processes to focus CTA Program resources on national and State priorities and initiatives. These processes include, but are not limited to:

- Strategically positioning staff to address natural resource needs;
- Locating program funds to address natural resource needs;
- Establishing short-term and long-term performance measures and goals;
- Establishing and implementing agreements and contracts;
- Formulating, enhancing, and expanding partnerships;
- Developing and transferring new and innovative technologies;
- Delivering conservation planning and other technical assistance to help decision makers meet eligibility requirements for USDA programs and other Federal, State, and local conservation programs;
- Conducting technical and program evaluations and assessments;
- Conducting resource inventories and assessments;
- Developing and delivering training;
- Expanding technical capacity, including the use of Technical Service Providers (TSP) and
- Developing public information and outreach strategies.

FY 2010 Activities

Over the last decade**,** demand for the CTA Program has increased, due to a number of key factors:

- The acceleration of technical assistance for special initiatives such as the Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay, and Mississippi River;
- Emergency Watershed Protection Program and Farm Bill programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Agricultural Water Enhancement Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program are experiencing increased requests for financial assistance and pre-program conservation planning support;
- Natural resource conservation systems need to be designed to reduce the risk of loss from climatic events such as drought, fire and flood, and to mitigate their effects;
- New technologies and conservation practices (such as renewable energy and biofuels, climatic adaptation, and enhancement of pollinator populations) that address emerging challenges and opportunities; and
- NRCS customer base is growing as NRCS: 1) addresses a growing number of niche enterprises such as aquaculture, specialty crops, sustainable and organic farming, etc.; and 2) engages producers who have not previously participated in NRCS programs but who are critical in solving the identified resource concerns in special initiative areas.

To meet the growing demand for technical assistance, the agency will continue to manage and invest in human capital to ensure the right skills are in the right location to deliver high quality products and services; improve and streamline internal business processes in order to accelerate service delivery;

expand the conservation partnership and build new alliances for cooperative approaches that conserve and protect natural resources; develop and use electronically based technology to provide a more customer-focused service; and strengthen our ability to develop innovative technology that addresses new and emerging conservation challenges.

Getting Conservation on the Ground. In FY 2010, the CTA Program was the major source of technical assistance to customers for planning and applying conservation practices and systems to protect and enhance natural resources on non-Federal land. These conservation actions provide public benefits in the form of better soil quality, reduced delivery of sediment and nutrients to surface and ground waters, increased conservation of water supplies, healthier grazing and forest land ecosystems, diverse and healthier wildlife habitat, and improved wetlands condition and function. In FY 2010, the CTA Program helped meet the three NRCS Foundation Goals in the following ways:

High Quality Productive Soils. Helping people ensure the quality of intensively worked soils is maintained or enhanced to enable sustained production of a safe, healthy and abundant food supply.

- Suites of conservation practices tailored to meet the needs of the land, the resources and the land manager or owner were incorporated into conservation plans covering over 12.9 million acres of cropland written.
- In accordance with the practices identified in those plans, conservation practices designed to improve soil quality were applied to over 8.2 million acres of cropland.
- Critical to understanding and implementing the best land management practices possible, soils data was made available to the public through the, Soil Survey Geographic Data Base (SSURGO) for 24 digital soil surveys. As of FY 2010, 3,071 certified digital soil surveys are available to the public.

Clean and Abundant Water. Helping people ensure that the quality of surface waters and groundwater is improved and maintained to protect human health, support a healthy environment, encourage a productive landscape; and that water is conserved and protected to ensure an abundant and reliable supply for the Nation.

- Release of nutrients from agricultural lands into local waters can reduce water quality and affect the health and welfare of people and animals living downstream. Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMPs) written by NRCS for the livestock producer ensure significant reductions in released nutrients. In FY 2010, 1,379 new CNMPs were written and 1,435 were applied.
- Watershed or Area-wide conservation plans take a look at the bigger picture and seek to address water quality concerns in a broader range than individual conservation plans. These more comprehensive plans allow leveraging of agency resources and the ability to focus on the most critical sources of threat to water supplied, and reap greater benefits over a wider area. Sixty-six of these plans were written in FY 2010. Most critical to adequate water supplies for people and for wildlife is the efficient use of water for irrigation. Improvement in the efficiency of irrigation practices was achieved on 758,036 acres in FY 2010.

Healthy Plant and Animal Communities. Helping people ensure that grassland, rangeland, and forest ecosystems are productive, diverse, and resilient; that working lands and waters provide habitat for diverse and healthy wildlife, aquatic species, and plant communities; and that wetlands provide quality habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife, protect water quality, and reduce flood damages.

- Healthy grazing lands ensure proper nutrient cycling, reduce erosion, improve water quality, and enhance carbon sequestration. Conservation plans were written for over 24.8 million acres of grazing land. Conservation practices which improve the health of grazing lands and protect the resource base were applied on over 17 million acres in FY 2010. Conservation practices specifically designed to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality on non-Federal lands were applied on over 9.2 million acres.
- Creation, restoration and enhancement of wetlands which provide critical wildlife habitat was accomplished on 65,797 acres.

Grazing Lands Conservation. Private grazing lands include 405 million acres of rangeland and 117 million acres of pastureland, as well as 53 million acres of forested land. Some cropland acres are also used for grazing. Well managed grazing contributes substantially to the environmental well-being and to the agricultural economy of the United States. Healthy grazing lands benefit landowners, local community residents, and society. Healthy grazing lands yield clean water for urban and rural use, aid in flood protection, and reduce greenhouse gases through the

exchange of carbon. Properly managed grazing lands reduce the impact of drought and provide aesthetic values, open space, and wildlife habitat.

Technical Assistance on Grazing Lands. In FY 2010, technical assistance provided to landowners and managers resulted in 24.8 million acres of planned conservation systems and more than 17 million acres of applied conservation systems on grazing lands that produced an overall improvement in grazing lands health. The conservation practice "prescribed grazing" (managing the controlled harvest of vegetation with grazing animals) was applied to more than 17.3 million acres.

Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative. In FY 2010, this initiative supported technical assistance, training, and demonstrations targeted to improve the health of grazing lands. Over 865 grazing land demonstrations were held, exhibiting grazing land technologies and management. These demonstrations involved 1,380 farms and ranches nationwide. Over 1,660 education and awareness activities (grazing land workshops, field days, and tours) with over 128,000 participants were conducted.

Clean Water Activities. NRCS addresses key water quality issues such as the potential environmental risks posed by animal feeding operations and the impairment of water resources from nutrients, sediments, and pesticides. The agency also provides the leadership needed to enhance coordination with the Environmental Protection Agency in areas of mutual interest related to water quality. Specific areas in which NRCS provides this technical leadership include: Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) Rule implementation, Oil Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures Rule; Pesticide Drift under the Clean Water Act, the President's Executive Order on Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration; as well as efforts involving water quality credit trading.

On July 19, 2010, the President issued Executive Order (E.O.) 13547, Stewardship of the Ocean, Our Coasts, and the Great Lakes, which adopted the Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force (Final Recommendations), and directed Federal agencies to implement the recommendations under the guidance of a new National Ocean Council. As a member of the National Ocean Council and a Department that plays a significant role in the conservation of our Nation's private lands, NRCS is in the position to make a significant contribution to achieving the President's vision to ensure that our ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes are healthy and resilient, safe and productive, and understood and treasured. Many of the President's nine priority objectives for implementation of the new Ocean Policy align well with USDA activities. USDA will play a significant role in assisting in the interagency effort to develop the national Strategic Action Plan for the priority objective Water Quality and Sustainable Practices on the Land, as outlined in the Final Recommendations. A broad range of existing USDA activities supports the new National Policy and the Final Recommendations, including the following actions:

- Conservation Initiatives which strategically target watersheds to improve coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes resource conditions (e.g., water quality, water quantity, climate change adaptation and resiliency, and coral reef conservation). In FY 2010, NRCS established four initiatives to improve coastal, ocean and Great Lakes conditions: Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative, Coral Reef Task Force Partnership Initiative, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, and the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watershed Initiative.
- Targeted conservation activities which are directed towards coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes ecosystems that support sustainable aquaculture and aquatic resource conservation. USDA implements numerous conservation practices on private lands that improve water quality and quantity, restore wetlands and flood plains, improve wildlife habitat, restore fish passage and other coastal aquatic habitats, and provide other ecosystem benefits to improve coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes ecosystems.

Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMP). Release of nutrients from agricultural operations (e.g., over-fertilization, animal waste disposal, dairy runoff) is a recognized source of contamination for the Nation's waterways. Voluntary CNMP's are perhaps the most effective tool for addressing these water quality problems associated with agriculture. An average CNMP takes nearly 150 hours of staff time to develop. Since FY 2002, over 43,000 CNMPs have been developed, and NRCS employees, conservation partners and technical service providers have spent over 6.5 million hours on the development of CNMPs for our Nation's farmers and ranchers.

In FY 2010, NRCS, conservation partners, and technical service providers assisted over 2,800 livestock and poultry producers in the development of new CNMPs for their operations. Conservation practices aimed at reducing the release of nutrients into the Nation's waterways were implemented through more than 3,100 CNMPs plans developed in previous years. The overall success of the planning effort is shown in the rate of CNMP application: over 35,000 (81percent) of those plans have been implemented as of FY 2010. Considering that these plans are voluntary in nature and may at times involve large financial investments on the part of the landowner or manager, this is viewed as a relatively high rate of success.

Pathogens and Dead Animals. In FY 2009, NRCS, in partnership with the University of California, addressed the issue of conservation and pathogens in food safety and disease control by revising its waterborne pathogen publication to reflect current science. In FY 2010, the final draft of the updated publication was completed by the university and underwent technical review. The review was conducted by NRCS technical personnel, personnel from other agencies, and experts from outside the Federal government. The publication will be made available on the NRCS website in FY 2011. In FY 2009, the university used the information in the pathogen publication to develop a web-based training course for NRCS employees and technical service providers. Ten modules, complete with narration, were finished and reviewed in FY 2010 and are scheduled for release in FY 2011 through USDA's AgLearn, an on-line training tool.

Hypoxia. USDA participated on the Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Watershed Nutrient Task Force (Task Force) this year. NRCS served as the USDA point of contact on the Task Force Coordinating Committee. NRCS also participated on four task force sub-committees assigned responsibility to provide technical assistance and guidance to the Deputy Under Secretary and the Task Force in the implementation of the Hypoxia Action Plan. The Hypoxia Action Plan is designed to reduce the size of the hypoxic zone in the Gulf, thus restoring and protecting the waters within the Mississippi/Atchafalaya River Basin, and improving community and economic conditions across the Basin.

Water Quality Leadership. During FY 2010, NRCS led in the development, advancement, and demonstration of new and innovative approaches to improving water quality. The following tools and activities highlight some of these advances:

- The Nutrient Trading Tool (NTT) is a web-based model that estimates changes in nitrogen losses based on implementation of improved management practices and calculates nitrogen credits for water quality credit trading projects. NRCS is validating this model on Maryland's Conservation Innovation Grant water quality credit trading project.
- Collaborated with EPA Office of Wastewater Management on the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit regulation under the Clean Water Act (CWA) to incorporate Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles when applying pesticides near or above water bodies.
- Developed a Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) request for proposals to evaluate "Potential for Conservation Practices to Reduce Pesticide Impacts on Threatened and Endangered Salmonid Species in the Pacific Northwest" that includes both innovative drift technology and the effectiveness of conservation practices.
- Collaborated with EPA on review of the preamble to CAFO rule changes.

National Resources Inventory (NRI) and Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP). NRI and CEAP enable NRCS to acquire, analyze, interpret, and deliver data and information on natural resources.
Several pieces of legislation authorize the NRI, most notably the Rural Development Act of 1972. CEAP was authorized under the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 Conference Report to Accompany H.R. 2646 (4a, b) and the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977 (RCA) (as amended by FCEA, P.L. 110-246, 122 Stat. 1651) [16 U.S.C. 2001-2009].

The NRI compiles natural resources data and information, conservation program data, and data from other Federal and non-Federal sources, in support of knowledge-based natural resource planning and decision-making at many landscape levels. NRI assesses natural resource conditions and trends on non-Federal lands in the United States, including privately-owned land, Tribal and trust lands, and lands controlled by State and local governments. NRI data and analyses provide the scientific basis for appropriate and effective conservation programs, sound agricultural

policy, realistic strategic and performance plans, and national farm policy discussion through the Farm Bill process. NRI data promote the wise development of programs and policies that support and enhance agricultural development and the economy, protect and preserve the quality of the environment, and enhance social values.

Every year, NRI data are collected for a scientifically selected subset of 800,000 NRI sample sites nationwide. The NRI is a survey based upon statistical principles and scientific procedures that extracts data from sample sites located in every county across the United States as well as in the Caribbean area and Pacific Basin. The NRI was conducted on five-year cycles from 1977 to 1997. Annual NRI data collection now delivers information in a timelier manner to support agricultural and conservation policy development and to help evaluate the impacts of policy execution and conservation program implementation. Although designed to supply long-term trend analyses, the NRI also has the flexibility to gather scientific information on emerging natural resource issues. The NRI is performed in cooperation with the Iowa State University Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology. FY 2010 NRI activities included:

- 2007 NRI Data Released. NRI summary results for data collection covering the 25-year period 1982-2007 were released in April 2010 as part of USDA's commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the founding of NRCS. The results focus on trends in land use and resource conditions for non-Federal lands within the 48 Contiguous States.
- NRI Rangeland Resource Assessment. In FY 2010, NRCS released the first national rangeland assessment that focuses on key issues in rangeland ecology. The assessment features numerous thematic maps based upon data collected at 10,000 NRI field plots statistically selected across 405 million acres of non-Federal rangelands in 19 States. Data collection protocols were developed collaboratively by NRCS, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Geological Survey, and the Bureau of Land Management. They are described in a ground-breaking paper, "National ecosystem assessments supported by scientific and local knowledge", published recently in *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*.
- Federal Staff at Remote Sensing Laboratories. NRCS's Remote Sensing Laboratories—located in Greensboro, NC; Fort Worth, TX; and Portland, OR—converted 84 contract positions to Federal government positions as a cost-saving measure to the Agency and in support of the Administration's position on in-sourcing, as outlined in the White House Memorandum issued on March 4, 2009. The conversion was designed and executed under a very tight deadline and resulted in the hiring of a skilled, flexible, and diverse Federal workforce at an annual savings of $1.6 million dollars compared to the contract cost. In addition, the Laboratories delivered high quality service to their customers without interruption during the transition. The effort was recognized for "Management Excellence" by USDA Secretary Vilsak during the 62nd Annual USDA Honor Awards Ceremony.
- Alaska NRI. NRCS included Alaska for the first time in the NRI and data collection and processing were performed throughout FY 2010. Final Alaska NRI results are expected during spring 2011. This will provide full 50-State NRI coverage for the first time. Local State-level estimates will also be available for the first time. These new and unique results will provide stakeholders and partners, including Alaska native groups, with credible and useful natural resource information.
- NRI Data to Support USDA Climate Change Programs. The NRI statistical framework is now linked to the Soil Survey Program and the combination will improve the core carbon statistics needed for greenhouse gas inventories, carbon accounting methods, tool development, and coefficients for estimating greenhouse gas sources and sinks. This will reduce the uncertainties associated with these estimates.

The CEAP is a multi-agency effort to quantify the environmental benefits associated with conservation practices implemented under the 2002 Farm Bill and other related programs. CEAP was designed to quantify the environmental effects of conservation practices and programs and provide a scientific basis for managing the agricultural landscape for environmental quality. Upon completion, project findings will be used to guide USDA conservation policy and program development and help conservationists, farmers, and ranchers make more informed conservation decisions.

Assessments in CEAP are carried out at national/regional and watershed scales. A national assessment is designed to provide summary estimates of conservation practice benefits and to assess the potential for USDA conservation

programs in meeting the Nation's environmental and conservation goals. National assessments are carried out for cropland, grazing lands, wetlands, and wildlife. Watershed Assessment studies are also conducted and provide more detailed, in-depth assessments and form the base for conservation and watershed assessment. The NRCS-led interagency CEAP assessed the effects of conservation practices at national, regional, and watershed scales and analyzed their effects on cultivated cropland, wetlands, grazing lands (rangelands and pasture lands), and wildlife (terrestrial and aquatic).

The FY 2010 CEAP activities included:

- Cropland Assessment. The CEAP-Cropland Assessment for the Upper Mississippi River Basin found that adoption of erosion-control practices reduced edge-of-field sediment loss by 69 percent and instream sediment loads by 37 percent just above the point where the Missouri River joins the Mississippi and that edge-of-field losses of phosphorus and nitrogen were reduced by 49 and 18 percent, respectively, thus improving water quality significantly.
- Wetlands Assessment. In a collaborative effort between NRCS and Farm Service Agency, the U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Ducks Unlimited, data were collected on soils, vegetation, nitrogen cycling, migratory birds, and amphibians from 88 different Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) sites in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley between 2006 and 2008. The findings are: conversion of cropland to WRP results in an immediately measurable reduction in soil erosion, total soil carbon increases significantly on WRP sites, and the aggregated annual social value for three ecosystem services provided by restored WRP wetlands in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley–nitrogen mitigation, greenhouse gas mitigation, and overwintering waterfowl foraging habitat–exceeds $297 million (Jenkins et al., 2010. Ecol. Econ. 69:1051-1061).
- Wildlife Assessment. Six CEAP-Wildlife regional assessments were conducted to study: the value of wetlands restored through WRP for wintering waterfowl; the importance of local-scale wetland hydrology for supporting amphibian population recruitment; and the success of long-term stream restoration practices increased total trout abundance and supported aquatic community shifts from non-native to native salmonids.
- Grazing Lands Assessment. A Rangeland Hydrology and Erosion Model (RHEM) is being developed for data collected exclusively from rangeland erosion experiments, and is designed to use data routinely collected by rangeland managers. Nationally 20 percent of non-Federal rangelands generate over 65 percent of the average annual soil loss (due to water) from rangelands. Over 72 million acres, or 18 percent of the non-Federal rangelands, might benefit from treatment to reduce soil loss. A wind erosion model for rangeland is being adapted to take advantage of the NRI rangeland data.
- Watershed Assessment Studies. Forty-two individual watershed case studies, representing a wide array of resource issues and modeling techniques, were active in 2010. Selected studies are as follows:
    - A major synthesis of the findings on the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) watershed studies. Initial findings have been shared with NRCS leaders and are being used to support the RCA Appraisal.
    - A CEAP Special Emphasis Watershed (SEW) final report was received for the Wood River study in 2010. SEW reports are in review and Conservation Insight preparation has begun.
    - The Cheney Lake Watershed in Kansas is one example of CEAP Special Emphasis Watershed findings. In the Cheney Lake Watershed, only 20 percent of the entire drainage area contributes 74 percent of all average annual sediment loads to Cheney Reservoir. Forty-one percent of the average annual suspended sediment load reaching Cheney Reservoir from upstream erosion sources is from tilled land. Conservation treatment models indicate major reductions in runoff and suspended sediment have resulted from conservation treatment.
    - New remotely sensed assessment techniques include cover crop nitrogen uptake for nutrient abatement, conservation tillage implementation on a watershed scale, and identifying locations for targeted suites of conservation practices. The cover crop remote sensing approach is being extended from the CEAP Choptank River Watershed to NRCS Showcase Watersheds in three States to support the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative and Executive Order for Bay restoration.

Getting Conservation on the Ground. CEAP has made a strong effort to provide assessments of the conservation efforts in various NRCS Initiatives: the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watershed Initiative (MRBI), the

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative and related Executive Order, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), the Sage Grouse Initiative, and the Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative (MBHI).

NRCS developed the Vulnerability Assessment and Program Performance Tool (VAPPT) to specifically address regional-level planning support for the special Agency initiatives. VAPPT integrates geospatially referenced data on farming activities, conservation program activities, natural resource information, and other science-based information into a single dynamic environment for regional-level analysis. VAPPT has been used in three Agency initiatives to date. In FY 2010, VAPPT was used in the MRBI and GLRI. For MRBI, a stakeholder's version of VAPPT was provided to partners responding to the Request for Proposals and provided information on NRCS resource concerns in their area, along with demographic information on the kinds of farmers and types of farms they would need to bring into any regional management plan.

In March 2010, USDA launched a new Sage Grouse Initiative to support the implementation of NRCS conservation practices that protect Sage Grouse and improve their habitat on private ranch lands in eleven western States. The initiative intensifies existing conservation program delivery in Sage Grouse population core areas. CEAP is supporting comprehensive, long-term monitoring and evaluation efforts to measure habitat improvements and biological response of Sage Grouse populations in response to the initiative. Information gathered through this assessment work will enable NRCS to adaptively focus on maximizing Sage Grouse range-wide benefits achieved through the initiative. This will ultimately help the species and ranchers by improving range conditions and working to preclude the need to list the Sage Grouse as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Natural Resource Technology Transfer. NRCS ensures field staff has the appropriate resources and necessary training to utilize the latest scientific research and technology for natural resource assessment, conservation planning, conservation system installation, and program delivery. In FY 2010, numerous new or revised conservation technology tools, techniques, and standards were released and are described below.

- Training and information on how to plan, interpret, and adapt nutrient application rates through the use of precision nutrient management planning were distributed for use by conservation planners when working with farmers and ranchers.
- Information on the Bobolink and Savannah sparrow, two species that are commonly found in working agricultural grasslands and serve as models for how agricultural practices can provide benefits for grassland birds, were provided to field staff. As field staff work with farmers and ranchers they will utilize this information to develop conservation plans that address habitat issues.
- A new technical release provided conservation planners with information on the selection of switchgrass cultivars, methods needed for establishing and evaluating stands of switchgrass, the management of switchgrass stands for biomass production, and wildlife considerations when managing switchgrass for biomass.
- NRCS rolled out Wind Erosion Prediction System (WEPS), Version 1, replacing the Wind Erosion Equation (WEQ). It is primarily a process-based, daily time-step computer model in a Windows environment that predicts soil erosion by wind. This helps conservation planners as they work with farmers on conservation practice alternatives.
- The Indigenous Stewardship Methods and the NRCS Conservation Practices Guidebook (Guidebook) was issued to provide guidance to employees of NRCS, partners, and indigenous cooperators who work with NRCS. The Guidebook provides a sensitive process in which knowledge is shared, allowing employees to incorporate the indigenous knowledge into NRCS's assistance through its conservation practices.
- The National Environmental Evaluation (EE) Form NRCS-CPA-52 was revised and updated to incorporate a new section into the EE which addresses whether the proposed action may involve any of the intensity factors for significance or whether the context of the potential impacts are considered significant under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
- Evaluation of seasonal high tunnel systems offer an option to extend the growing season in many areas of the United States to successfully produce vegetable and other specialty crops for personal or commercial use. High tunnels are applicable to all farms, but may offer particular advantages to small, limited resource, and organic farmers by extending the growing season, producing higher quality crops, improved yields, and addressing soil and water quality concerns.

- Provided guidance to the field office staff regarding usage of existing conservation practices that may have energy-related benefits and also promoted the development of the Agricultural Energy Management Conservation Activity Plan.
- The NRCS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service prepared the Sage Grouse Conference Report. The Conference Report lists each conservation practice, its purpose, the resource concern treated, potential benefits and adverse effects to the Sage Grouse, and required conservation measures.
- Distributed the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers approved standard which supports energy audits of typical North American farming operations.
- Updated about 42 percent of 168 conservation practice standards including adding the On-Farm Equipment Efficiency Improvement standard which will assist with implementing recommendations from on-farm energy audits. These new and updated standards reflect evidence-based science, and help producers address critical issues.
- Updated 56, or approximately one third, of the conservation practice standards after a public review of all the conservation practice standards. The review ensured the completeness and relevance of the standards to local agricultural, forestry, and natural resource needs including specialty crops, native and managed pollinators, bioenergy crop production, and forestry. The review also ensured that the standards provide for the optimal balance between meeting site-specific conservation needs and minimizing risks of design failure and associated costs of construction and installation.

ProTracts is a web based application that helps NRCS efficiently manage applications, contracts, obligations, payments, and performance reporting. This is the primary electronic tool used by NRCS and partners to develop and manage contracts associated with NRCS's financial assistance programs.

Highly Erodible Land and Conservation Compliance (HEL). Highly Erodible Land is land on which the soils, when planted to crops, have a high vulnerability to increased erosion through wind, water, and gullying than soils on land which is not erodible or which is in permanent vegetative cover. Participants in USDA programs are required to protect their HEL cropland from excessive soil erosion, by complying with HEL regulations found in the provisions of 16 U.S.C. §§ 3801; 3811-3814. USDA participants accomplish this by implementing a conservation system that provides for either a substantial reduction in soil erosion, or when breaking out native vegetation, a system that results in no substantial increase in soil erosion. NRCS classifies about 101.1 million acres of America's cropland as HEL, approximately 27 percent of the Nation's cropland.

Wetlands Conservation Compliance (WC). Title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985, 16 U.S.C. §§ 3801; 3821-3824, defines NRCS's responsibilities regarding wetlands conservation compliance and includes making wetland determinations, processing and resolution of appeals, development of mitigation and restoration plans, determination of minimal effect exemptions, and implementation of scope and effect evaluations for installation of new drainage systems and maintenance of existing systems. Compliance reviews are conducted annually in every State.

Compliance status reviews are conducted on farm and ranch lands designated as having received USDA benefits and which are subject to the HEL or Wetlands Conservation (WC) provisions, or both. A compliance status review is an inspection of a cropland tract to determine whether the USDA participant is in compliance with the HEL/WC Provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985. The NRCS compliance status review process requires employees to make an on-site determination when a violation of the HEL/WC provisions is suspected, and ensures that only qualified NRCS employees report violations. The Food Security Act of 1985, as amended, also requires NRCS to conduct reviews of approximately one percent of HEL and/or WC cropland on farms that have received some government payment in the prior year. In addition, NRCS must review five percent of all farm loan recipients from the prior year, and review HEL or WC tracts of cropland owned by any government employee every three years.

Penalties for non-compliance range from a Good Faith Exemption issued by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) which allows the producer one year to correct the violation, to a determination by FSA that the producer is ineligible for any government payment and must pay back any current and/or prior year funding. The compliance review year runs from January 1 to December 1. Therefore, FY 2010 final review data will be available in February 2011.

Results of FY 2009 reviews show that a high percentage of landowners are following NRCS approved conservation plans and are, therefore, in compliance with HEL requirements. In FY 2009, compliance reviews were conducted on 20,474 tracts (over three million acres of cropland). Approximately 1.4 percent of the tracts were found to be in non-compliance: 177 tracts had HEL and WC violations and 100 tracts had WC violations. This is considered to be a low rate of non-compliance and speaks well for the conservation planning done by NRCS. Of the remaining 98.6 percent, (21,683 tracts) that were in compliance, 3.5 percent (726 tracts) had been issued variances or exemptions as provided by statute. This indicates a relatively low rate of non-compliance with exemptions provided due to extenuating circumstances. The data from the past four years confirms that conservation measures prescribed by NRCS are being effectively implemented on our most vulnerable land.

Four Year Summary of Tract Reviews and Tracts Out of Compliance	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total Tracts Reviewed	22,741	20,134	22,755	20,474
Tracts Out of Compliance	319	276	333	277
Percent Out of Compliance	1.4%	1.4%	1.5%	1.4%
No. of States Recording Non Compliance	33	33	34	30

CTA Program Funds Customer Assistance. Through CTA, NRCS provided science-based technical assistance to 81,409 customers in FY 2010 helping them plan and apply conservation measures on the land. All people in the Nation benefited either directly or indirectly from the customer service NRCS provided through the CTA Program; however, the primary customers are land owners and managers who make the day-to-day decisions about natural resources use and management on non-Federal lands.
NRCS provides CTA to four main customer groups:

- Farmers and ranchers who own, operate or live on farms and ranches;
- Other members of the private sector who support agriculture production and conservation;
- Governments, including Tribes, with responsibility for natural resource use and management; and
- Non-profit organizations whose mission aligns with that of NRCS regarding natural resource management.

CTA Program Leverages Technical Assistance. NRCS field staff work in partnership with over 8,100 State agencies and conservation district employees to assist customers with their conservation planning and implementation needs. These non-Federal partners contributed an estimated $310 million in funds and services to support joint conservation efforts in FY 2010. This leveraging was made possible through mutual agreements that established conservation partnerships with State governments, local soil and water conservation districts, Tribes, and other conservation organizations to formulate and implement an integrated conservation program. Working with partners allows NRCS to service more customers and achieve the conservation goals of landowners, local governments, State agencies, and the Nation. NRCS ensures that conservation efforts across the Nation are made in a more coordinated approach, are mutually beneficial, and attain the greatest gain for the taxpayer's dollar. NRCS fosters ownership of conservation efforts at all levels and brings previously inaccessible resources.

Technical Service Providers (TSP). TSPs expand and accelerate NRCS's ability to plan and apply conservation practices that enhance, restore, or conserve the Nation's soil, water, and related natural resources on non-Federal land. TSPs assist landowners and agricultural producers in applying conservation practices on the land. They may be individuals or entities such as private businesses, nonprofit organizations, Tribes, State and local governments, or Federal agencies outside USDA. TSPs provide participants in USDA conservation programs with convenient access to technical services, quality work, and professional one-on-one technical assistance. TSPs develop conservation plans; perform selected compliance studies; plan, design, and implement conservation practices; and evaluate completed conservation practices.

The Technical Service Provider program provides eligible participants with consistent, science-based, site-specific practices designed to achieve conservation objectives on land active in agricultural, forestry, or related uses. The program is national in scope and is offered throughout the United States and territories.

To become a certified TSP, individuals or entities must enter into a certification agreement, cooperative agreement, or contract with NRCS. TSPs must meet education, experience, and credential requirements that are established for each certification category. This ensures that technical assistance is provided in accordance with the NRCS statement of work associated with each conservation practice. All certification categories and criteria are reviewed and updated annually. A specially designed Web site, http://techreg.usda.gov, maintains certification criteria, training opportunities, and information for TSP.

In FY 2010, NRCS maintained memoranda of understandings with eleven recommending organizations that provide TSP certification. NRCS signed agreements or renewed the certification of 193 individuals and 25 businesses resulting in $54 million in obligations for service. Of this amount 52 percent went to private sector TSP. NRCS conservation programs accounting for the majority of TSP obligations include the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (47 percent), Conservation Reserve Program (nine percent), Watershed Rehabilitation Program (seven percent), Wetland Reserve Program (seven percent), Conservation Technical Assistance Program (seven percent), Small Watershed Operations (six percent), Conservation Stewardship Program (four percent), and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (four percent). The remaining nine percent of TSP obligations were distributed among other conservation programs. Over 1,250 certified TSPs are available to help program participants apply conservation.

The most common plans and practices implemented with TSP provided technical assistance included nutrient management plans, integrated pest management, upland wildlife habitat management, conservation crop rotations, prescribed grazing, residue and tillage management, cover crop, and forest stand improvement.

In FY 2010, TSPs played a key role in the implementation of the Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) pilot. NRCS offered twelve approved CAPs. To adopt a CAP, a producer was required to work with a certified TSP. A total of 4,372 CAPs were written in FY 2010 in 43 States covering nine resource areas: nutrient management, forest management, grazing management, integrated pest management, irrigation water management, agriculture energy management, transition from irrigation to dryland farming, transition to organic, and fish and wildlife management.

Michigan: Meeting the Need for Forestry TSPs through Intensive Recruiting and Training. In FY 2010, NRCS forest management CAP was piloted in Michigan. Michigan did not have any TSPs certified to write CAPs. To respond to the need for forestry qualified TSPs as program outreach efforts and generate interest, NRCS staff undertook an intense effort to recruit and certify as many private foresters as possible through workshops across the State sponsored by local Conservation Districts. These efforts produced 15 certified TSP foresters who soon wrote 101 forestry conservation activity plans for Michigan State.

International Assistance. NRCS's international assistance program provides both short and long term technical assistance and leadership for the development of natural resource conservation programs and projects abroad. The program ensures that NRCS employees continue to broaden their knowledge of relevant international conservation issues, as well as participate in the mutual exchange of conservation technology with countries that face soil and water conservation issues similar to those in the United States. This program furthers an enhanced understanding of various international resource conservation issues, improved international relations and access to technology developed in other countries.

NRCS cooperates with other Federal agencies in providing technical assistance in natural resource conservation to countries affected by disasters, conflicts, or mismanagement of natural resources. NRCS assists other Federal agencies by arranging meetings between agency specialists and foreign visitors who are interested in how NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners. NRCS worked with other countries on scientific and exchange projects that benefit both countries.

The Agency provided soil taxonomy, rangeland management, and conservation planning training to specialists in Mexico in FY 2010. The goal of the training was to help solve problems along the border region that affected both countries. Funding was obtained from the United States Agency for International Development.

Also, in FY 2010, NRCS led the Watershed Rehabilitation and Water Management Working Group for the United States–Afghanistan–Pakistan Trilateral Initiative. The agency reviewed and recommended proposals to be funded by the United States and helped Pakistan select on-farm demonstration sites.

NRCS Scholarship Programs. In FY 2010, NRCS participated in three scholarship programs, the USDA 1890 National Scholars Program, the 1994 Tribal Scholarships Program, and the Public Service Leaders Scholarships Program. The USDA 1890 Program, a partnership between USDA and 1890 Historically Black Land-Grant Universities, awards scholarships to students who will attend one of the 1890 Historically Black Land-Grant Universities. The USDA 1994 Tribal Scholars Program, a partnership between of USDA and 1994 Tribal Colleges and Universities, awards scholarships to students who are attending one of the 1994 Tribal Colleges and Universities. In addition, because many of the Tribal Colleges have two-year programs, students may transfer from a Tribal College to a Land Grant College or University to complete their education. The Public Service Leaders Scholarship program is designed to assist USDA NRCS managers in attracting talented and diverse students to the agency. It provides combined scholarship and internship opportunities to undergraduate and graduate students leading to permanent employment upon completion of their degrees. Students are recruited chiefly from Hispanic-servicing institutions.

These scholarship opportunities strengthen the conservation partnership with State and Tribal colleges and universities, and Land Grant Institutions, and help attract outstanding students from underrepresented groups to pursue careers in agriculture and natural resource sciences. Each program provides NRCS with highly qualified, diverse staff to fill career positions. The program also increases the number of students studying agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, or other related disciplines at participating institutions.

NRCS Outreach Partnerships. NRCS collaborates with selected 1890 Land Grant Colleges and Universities to broaden the transfer of technologies through the 1890 Centers of Excellence to the communities they serve through the Biological and Agricultural Systems Engineering programs, and the 1890 National Scholars Program. The Centers of Excellence (COE) obligated $180,000 to develop two cooperative agreements. The two cooperative agreements implemented in FY 2010 provided technical support to the Environmental Science Field Station at South Carolina State University for science and agronomy courses, as well as hands-on training for 24 students. COE provided outreach related to NRCS Farm Bill Programs which stimulated program participation and increased awareness of conservation technology related to plants and water quality. Outreach to 1890 Land Grant Community allowed the Virginia State University to hire two staff members for one year. NRCS State Conservationists in Florida and Oklahoma provided guaranteed technical assistance funding to outstanding students who are committed to USDA careers in agriculture at Florida A&M University and Langston University, Oklahoma.

NRCS has partnered with community-based organizations through contribution agreements to assist new immigrant and specialty crop farmers with record keeping needs and applied technology to help increase the adoption of conservation measures and systems on their operations. This work was done with Hispanic and Asian farmers in several States, including Florida, California, Arkansas, Washington, North Carolina, New Mexico, Texas, Alabama, Massachusetts, Mississippi and Maryland.

Small, Limited Resource, and Beginning Farmers and Ranchers. With technical assistance geared to their unique needs, NRCS helps small, limited resource, beginning, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers maintain the economic viability of their farm operations while conserving natural resources. The agency works to overcome barriers or obstacles that might otherwise prevent this group of farmers and ranchers from fully participating in NRCS programs or receiving technical assistance.

Assistance to American Indians and Alaska Natives (AIAN). Native American communities hold four percent of the United States land and constitute the second largest interest after the Federal government. USDA programs and services are available to American Indian and Alaska Native farmers and ranchers. NRCS programs strive to meet

Tribal demands for improved agriculture, environmental and conservation quality such as conservation of crop, pasture, and rangelands; rural landscape services; wildlife habitat; wetlands; improved water and air quality; and food, fiber and timber production.

In FY 2010, NRCS continued to provide assistance to American Indians and Alaska Natives by helping to increase Tribal participation among the 565 Federally recognized Tribal governments and strengthening conservation activities on Tribal lands. NRCS's objectives are:

- To operate within a government-to-government relationship with Federally recognized Indian Tribes;
- To consult to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law, with Indian Tribal governments before taking action that affect Federally recognized Indian Tribes;
- To assess the impact of NRCS's activities on Tribal trust resources and assure that Tribal interests are considered before the activities are undertaken; and
- To remove procedural impediments to working directly with Tribal governments on conservation activities that affect trust property or government rights of the Tribes and work cooperatively with other agencies.

The FY 2010 activities included NRCS working directly with Tribes to provide financial assistance and/or technical assistance. Through Agency outreach efforts, Tribal governments are offered assistance in conservation planning, partnerships, grants, cost-share programs, and training. NRCS employees are trained in Tribal culture and protocol. NRCS has 45 full-time offices on Tribal lands and approximately 230 Tribal liaisons assisting the Tribes. In FY 2010 NRCS awarded the following Farm Bill contracts and funding on Tribal lands; 533 EQIP contracts ($23.1 million), 68 WHIP contracts ($3.8 million); ten AWEP contracts ($0.4 million); 211 CSP contracts ($8.5 million); eight AMA contracts ($0.2 million); and Tribes received Conservation Innovative Grants (CIG) in the amount of $68,000 for projects/agreements. Other FY 2010 activities included:

- National Agreements: NRCS has two national contribution agreements with Tribal partners. One with the Inter Tribal Agriculture Council (IAC) to provide basic tax instruction and education to Tribes and Tribal operators. The second agreement with the Indian Nation Alliance Conservation (INCA) to provide on-site support, outreach, and training to Tribal Conservation Districts and American Indian and Alaska Natives producers, farmers, land users and their Tribal operators who wish to participate in NRCS conservation programs.
- NRCS Internship: In FY 2010, NRCS hosted Washington Internship for Native Student interns. The eight week summer internship served as a recruitment vehicle for NRCS to gain top quality Tribal students for future employment.
- National Outreach Share Point: The Web site is designed to increase communication and collaboration between NRCS employees and Tribes. The site has a separate section for Tribal outreach and offers important linkages to key policies, and training tools to better understand how to work more effectively with Tribes and their members.
- USDA Action Plan: NRCS continues to implement the USDA, Office of Tribal Relations Action Plan on Tribal consultation. The plan requires all Federal agencies to provide effective Tribal consultation and collaboration in carrying out of their roles and responsibilities.
- Joint USDA Interagency Team: NRCS participated in a joint USDA Interagency team assisting with the establishment of seven regional Tribal consultation meetings. The meetings provide Tribal leaders opportunities to comment on 11 NRCS 2008 Farm Bill rules. These consultative activities are fulfilling NRCS's commitment to the White House for enabling consultation with Tribes.
- Tribal Policy: In complying with the USDA Action Plan on Tribal consultation, NRCS updated the Tribal policy which provides guidance to NRCS employees working and interacting with American Indians and Alaska Native Tribes and their members.
- NAWG Member: NRCS participated on the USDA Native American Working Group (NAWG). This group meets monthly to discuss and collaborate on agencies Tribal issues, and assists the USDA Office of Tribal Relations to implement the Departments Action Plan on Tribal Consultation.
- Tribal Conservation District: NRCS facilitated the execution of a new Tribal Conservation Distinct mutual agreement between the Secretary of Agriculture and the Picayune Rancheria of the Chukchansi Indians, and the Picayune Rancheria Tribal Resource Conservation District of California to form the 35th Tribal Conservation District recognized by the Secretary.

- Tribal Leaders Panel: NRCS Regional Conservationists sponsored a panel of Tribal leaders for 16 New State Conservationists. The focus of this initial panel discussion provided new State Conservationist's insight on how to better work with Tribes in their State.
- NRCS National Survey: NRCS conducted a national survey which identified and highlighted information on Tribal consultation activities, collaboration events, meetings, and agency workgroups focusing on Tribal relations activities from the 52 States territories and areas.

Accountability and Management Improvements. NRCS took several steps to improve accountability and management practices in FY 2010. These steps are identified below:

- Initiated an accountability process, ConservationStat, to track implementation of NRCS priorities, ensured success of priority initiatives, identified risks and improved overall Agency performance.
- Conducted five oversight and evaluation reviews and ten civil rights reviews resulting in corrective action plans.
- Conducted Highly Erodible Cropland Conservation and Wetlands Conservation Compliance on 21,960 tracts.
- Addressed the findings of the FY 2009 Agency financial audit with corrective actions being taken during and following the audit process that indicated NRCS must improve its accounting and financial practices and procedures. Corrective actions included:
  - NRCS updated 100 percent of its financial policy and 75 percent of the General Manual Policy strengthening its organizational functions, structure and controls.
  - During FY 2010, NRCS started the year with 27 open audits and 105 open recommendations of which nine audits and 49 recommendations were closed.
  - Future planned actions include the development of policies, training, and quality assurance activities related to undelivered orders, unfilled customer orders, proper accrual and disbursement procedures, real property management, accounting procedures, and agreements with non-Federal partners.
  - For NRCS partners, the financial procedures instituted as a result of the audit will potentially cause some changes, particularly in the handling of leases for office space and the frequency of submitting invoices and progress reports for agreement payments.
- Activated the audit tracking system to track progress on recommended actions and facilitate the analysis of weaknesses identified in all audits.
- Continued to upgrade agency accountability software applications and hardware security to correctly safeguard all private and sensitive information, including Personally Identifiable Information (PII), in compliance with the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Special Publication (SP) 800-53.

SOIL SURVEY

Current Activities

Program Objectives. Understanding and managing soil as a strategic natural resource helps sustain the health and economy of the Nation. Soil survey is an essential tool for regional and local conservation planning that allows people to manage natural resources. Scientists and policy makers use soil survey information in studying climate change and evaluating the sustainability and environmental impacts of land use and management practices. Soil surveys provide input data that computer simulation models use to predict the dynamics of carbon, nutrients, and water in soils. Soil surveys are used by planners, engineers, farmers, ranchers, developers, and home owners to evaluate soil suitability and make management decisions for farms, home sites, subdivisions, commercial and industrial sites, wildlife and recreational areas.

National Cooperative Soil Survey. NRCS is the lead Federal agency for the National Cooperative Soil Survey (NCSS), a partnership of Federal land management agencies, State agricultural experiment stations, private consultants, and State and local governments. NCSS promotes the use of soil information, and develops policies and procedures for conducting soil surveys and producing soil information. NRCS provides the scientific expertise to enable the NCSS to develop and maintain a uniform system for mapping and assessing soil resources which allows soil information from different locations to be shared regardless of which agency collects it. NRCS provides most of the training in soil surveys. Federal agencies and assists with their soil inventories on a reimbursable basis.

Standards and Mechanisms for Soil Information. NRCS is responsible for developing the standards and mechanisms for soil information on national tabular and spatial data infrastructure required by Executive Order 12906. NRCS is perfecting a National Soil Survey Information System (NASIS), and producing publications that are accessible to the public through the internet http://soils.usda.gov. The Soil Data Warehouse houses archived soil survey data, and the Soil Data Mart is used to distribute data to the public. Web Soil Survey is the primary way of distributing published soil surveys, making it easier to keep soil information current with continual public access.

Program Operations. The primary focus of the Soil Survey Program is to provide current and consistent map interpretations and data sets of the soil resources of the United States. This includes providing useful information to the public in a variety of formats (i.e., electronic and Web-based). The program will continue to focus on maintaining quality soil information and helping people understand and use the soil resource in a sustainable manner. Key program elements include:

- Mapping. Mapping procedures are managed based on physiographic, rather than administrative boundaries. Soil surveys, based on natural landscape boundaries rather than political boundaries, are more efficient to produce, and provide consistent, quality data for assessing and planning the use and protection of landscape units (watersheds or ecosystems). Physiographic surveys provide consistent data that can be used easily by landowners with holdings in multiple jurisdictions, or by community, State, or regional planners. A primary challenge is to complete the initial soil survey for the entire country. This challenge also includes completing surveys on American Indian land holdings as well as public lands controlled by the Forest Service, United States Military, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service. Public lands are important to include with private lands when planning land use and conservation for watersheds, landscapes, or ecological sites. NRCS is working cooperatively within the NCSS to accomplish these goals.
- Rapid Assessment of Soil Carbon for Conservation Planning. Soil carbon sampling and analysis will be conducted in FY 2011 to provide data on carbon stocks for the United States by soil groupings, land use and management.
- Information Management. The National Soil Information System (NASIS), a part of the NCSS information system, is where soil scientists develop, manage, and deliver soil information to the public. Digital soil surveys enable customers to use electronic soil data in geographic information systems for generating maps tailored to their needs and performing complex resource analyses. NRCS delivers these data via the internet.
- Web Soil Survey. Web Soil Survey (WSS) provides soil data and information produced by the NCSS. WSS is operated by NRCS and provides access to the largest natural resource information system in the world. NRCS has soil maps and data available online for more than 95 percent of the Nation's counties. The site is updated and maintained online as the single authoritative source of soil survey information. WSS continues to be a popular tool for people needing soils information in the United States. The number of site visits increased 14 percent and the number of online printable reports created by customers increased 14.7 percent in FY 2010.
- Digital Soil Surveys. The NCSS develops and maintains two scales of soil surveys:
  - Soil Survey Geographic Data Base (SSURGO) is used primarily by landowners, townships, counties or parishes, and watershed hydrologic units for planning and resource management. SSURGO contains the most detailed level of soil information.
  - United States General Soil Map (STATSGO) is used primarily for multi-county, State, river basin planning and resource management and monitoring.
- Technical Soil Services. The soil technical assistance function focuses primarily on providing diversified products and assistance in using soil information through USDA Service Centers. The National Technical Soil Services Handbook was released in FY 2010.

FY 2010 Activities.

- Acres Mapped. Soil surveys have been prepared on over 2.1 billion acres. During FY 2010, NRCS soil scientists mapped or updated 37.9 million acres and another 930,000 acres were mapped or updated by other Federal, State, and local agencies in cooperation with NRCS. Soil mapping priorities are directed toward completion of all previously unmapped private lands and updating mapping and interpretations to meet current user needs and requirements.

- Soil Survey accomplishments on American Indian and Alaska Native lands. NRCS invested one million dollars in FY 2010, to accelerate soil survey mapping on American Indian and Alaska Native lands, resulting in 2.1 million acres mapped or updated.
- Digitized Soil Surveys. During FY 2010, NRCS and NCSS partners digitized 24 soil surveys to national digitizing standards. A total of 3,071 digitized surveys are now available. This is part of an initiative to digitize all modern soil surveys. National digitizing standards for soil surveys have been developed that are consistent with Federal Geographic Data Committee standards.
- Soil Surveys Used Interactively Online. In FY 2010, the Web Soil Survey website logged over 1.7 million user visits and over 499 million hits. The user visits per day averaged over 4,700.
- Technical Analysis and Tool Development. The Soil Survey Laboratory (SSL) of the National Soil Survey Center provides analytical support which includes research and methods development and testing, as well as analyses to support on-going soil survey activities around the Nation. In FY 2010, SSL performed over 170,000 analyses and continued its efforts to provide timely data delivery. The SSL developed visible and near-infrared diffuse reflective spectroscopy (VNIR) methods and implemented measuring the reflectance spectra for incoming laboratory samples. The methods are being used to predict soil characterization data including soil organic carbon. The NSSC awarded six competitive research grants to NCSS cooperators to investigate problems pertinent to soil survey update and enhancement. The SSL Methods Manual, a companion document intended for field use, was released in FY 2010. The SSL Information Manual will be released in FY 2011.
- Research in Soil Geography. National Soil Survey Center and National Geospatial Research Unit have collaborated since 2005 to support research and development into the science of hydropedology and digital soil mapping as defined by the International Union of Soil Science. This research is generally conducted collaboratively with NCSS, university partners, and related institutions.

Getting Conservation on the Ground.

Soil Survey used in response to Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. In response to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico, NRCS personnel developed conservation practice standard 772 – Organic Sorbents for the Remediation of Oil-Contaminated Soils. This standard promotes the use of organic sorbents to contain spilled petroleum products and provide conditions that are conducive for natural attenuation (i.e. microorganism activity) to occur when sorbent materials are left in place. The purpose of the standard was to prevent or mitigate effects of spilled petroleum products on soil, water, and plant quality; eliminate unsightly residues; reduce erosion; protect wildlife and wetland functions and restore areas to beneficial use. This standard gave responders an additional tool to alleviate the potential damage posed by the oil flowing into fragile coastal marshes. Digital soil survey data was used to identify the areas determined to contain the soils most susceptible to damage from the by-products produced by the spill. The soils data removed the “guess work” from the decision making process of determining where to send reconnaissance teams and where to apply specific remediation techniques. Spatial soils data was also used to determine the extent of water contact with land in order to establish a reliable estimate of the potential impacts of the oil spill. The SSURGO data was developed using high resolution Color Infrared (CIR) imagery and is currently the best database in Louisiana for determining land-water interface.

Soil Survey Data important in predicting impacts of atmospheric pollution entering the soil. The National Atmospheric Deposition Program (NADP) monitors precipitation chemistry. The program is a cooperative effort between many different groups, including Federal, State, Tribal and local governmental agencies, educational institutions, private companies, and non-governmental agencies. Last year, the annual meeting of the NADP was attended by the National Leader for Technical Soil Service by invitation to learn of needs for soils information in the program's activities and how the Soil Survey Division could aid their efforts. A model to predict the fate of atmospheric contaminants entering the soil and the effects on vegetation and surface and ground water nationally needed weatherable soil mineral data to complete model input requirements. Since then, the model developers have been made aware of the vast national soil survey laboratory database that includes mineralogy data and other data access websites including Official Series Descriptions, Soil classification files, Soil Series Extent Tool, and the gridded SSURGO soil database for the nation. Modelers have been working with NRCS Soil Scientists on the proper use of the data.

Soil Scientists assist Tribal Colleges. NRCS soil scientists and conservationists in North Dakota are working with Sitting Bull College and United Tribes Technical College to provide an interactive and informative background on soil and soil health, while promoting careers in Geographic Information Systems and Soil Science. On Sitting Bull College, Dr. Mafany Mongoh is developing educational programs with NRCS assistance to provide career opportunities for students on the reservation. Unemployment of young adults is particularly high on the Standing Rock Reservation and Dr. Mongoh felt it was important to expose his students to professionals in the soils field, "I strongly believe applied components of any class play a big part in how students tie down concepts they learn in class. It gives the students the opportunity to see that theory and concepts are not abstract, but do have a place in the daily activities of most people, professional and otherwise. My students were very appreciative of this opportunity and I definitely know they have benefitted from your presentations. It is my intention to make these presentations an integral part of my class for Intro to Soil Science."

SNOW SURVEY AND WATER SUPPLY FORECASTING

Current Activities

Program Objectives. The Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting (SSWSF) Program collects high elevation snow data in the Western United States and provides managers and users with snowpack data and water supply forecasts. NRCS field staff collects and analyzes data on snow depth, snow water equivalent, and other climate parameters at nearly 1,800 mountain sites. The data are used to provide estimates of annual water availability, spring runoff, and summer stream flows. Climate change researchers have increasingly accessed the data for evaluating trends in the Western United States. The water supply forecasts are used by individuals, Tribes, organizations, and government for decisions relating to agricultural production, hydroelectric power generation, fish and wildlife management, municipal and industrial water supply, reservoir managements, urban development, flood control, recreation, and water quality management.

Program Operations. The SSWSF Program provides water and climate information and technology support for natural resource management in the 12 Western States (Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Utah, and Wyoming). The National Water and Climate Center (NWCC) located in Portland, Oregon provides leadership and technology support to the States, and directly provides water supply forecasts. The program is designated as a cooperative effort because it operates with the assistance from, and in cooperation with, both public and private entities that rely on consistent and accurate water forecasts.

With 50-80 percent of the water supply in the West arriving each year in the form of snow, the SSWSF Program provides critical information for water managers. The demographic, physical, and political landscape of the Western United States is changing rapidly and there is increasing competition over water for irrigation, municipal, and industrial uses. Competition for in-stream uses also has increased for river-based recreation, esthetic enjoyment, fish and wildlife habitat, and hydroelectric power generation. Increasing water demands will require more precise management of this valuable resource. In citing the importance of reliable water information to facilitate water management decisions, the Western Governors Association notes that one of the sources that Western States depend on is the SSWSF Program data from its Snow Telemetry (SNOTEL) sites.

The SSWSF Program consists of a network of more than 900 manually measured snow courses and over 813 automated SNOTEL sites. The economic and societal value of the program is illustrated in the recently released report "A Measure of Snow," which is available on the NWCC Web page, http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov. and provides numerous examples of the applications and economic benefits of the SSWSF Program to users throughout the Western United States.

Climate change projections increase uncertainty about water supply. A study by the Rocky Mountain Climate Change Organization finds that "…no other effect of climate disruption is as significant as how it endangers already scarce snowpacks and water supply." The potential impacts could include smaller snowpack resulting in less reservoir storage, earlier snowmelt which would increase the length of time between peak flows and summer water

user needs, changes in flood peaking, receding glaciers, more evaporation and dryness, and possibly less groundwater due to a decreased availability of surface water and greater fire danger.

FY 2010 Activities.

SNOTEL. The effort to convert manual snow courses to automated SNOTEL sites continues to be a program priority. In FY 2010, the network increased to 813 sites. SNOTEL collects the vast majority of the critical, high-elevation snowpack and climate data used to estimate water yields in the mountainous west; and plays a key role in forecasting flooding and other life-threatening snow related events by providing hourly precipitation, temperature, and snowpack depletion information. Snowpack information enables emergency management agencies to effectively anticipate and mitigate flood damage months in advance of the spring snowmelt. These data are also useful in the anticipation and mitigation of the effects of drought.

SNOTEL Data Quality. The NWCC, in partnership with Oregon State University, has completed a program-wide quality control review of SNOTEL temperature and precipitation data collected since 1982. Quality control assists water supply forecasters by providing highly accurate, updated data for hydrographic model input as well as quickly alerting field personnel of sensor failures on remote data collection stations. Quality control of real-time or near real-time data is being pursued through Portland State University (PSU).

Master Stations Relocation and Purchase. Master stations are used to receive and transmit climate data via meteorburst technology collected at remote SNOTEL and Soil Climate Analysis Network (SCAN) site locations. The master station constructed at the Dugway Proving Grounds in Utah became fully operational in FY 2010. The master station near Boise, Idaho underwent significant upgrades during the year, including a new building and antenna cabling. NRCS purchased four additional master stations in FY 2010 to provide support for the SNOTEL and SCAN networks. One of these stations was decommissioned for parts and two others were upgraded and brought on-line into the NRCS system. These additional master stations mainly support SCAN, but also provide additional coverage and back-up to the SNOTEL operations. The SCAN network is funded through cooperative Federal and non-Federal partnerships and managed through the NWCC. Along with SNOTEL information, SCAN information, collected through 184 sites in 40 States, supports drought monitoring and mitigation activities as part of the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS), flood risk assessments, crop productivity, disease and insect infestation modeling and a wide variety of NRCS Global Change research activities; as well as provides data for soils research, water balance models, watershed planning and weather forecast models. NRCS ownership of these sites ensures proper maintenance and continuous access to remote communications.

Water Supply Forecasts. Water supply forecasts are produced from January through June in partnership with the National Weather Service. During the FY 2010 forecast season, the SSWSF Program issued 10,983 seasonal water supply forecasts at 705 streamflow forecast points. In addition, SSWSF hydrologists developed 176 daily water supply forecast models that run automatically using daily SNOTEL data to track climatic trends throughout the forecast season. From December through March, these forecast models augment the official forecasts, producing 21,120 additional trend forecasts to assist water resource users and managers. Major cooperators include the Bureau of Reclamation, Corps of Engineers, Bonneville Power Administration, State and local agencies, power utility companies, irrigation districts, Tribal Nations, Canada, and Mexico. Among other uses, water supply forecasts are used:

- By irrigators to make effective use of limited water supplies for agricultural production needs;
- By the Federal government in administering international water treaties with Canada and Mexico;
- By State governments in managing intrastate streams and interstate water compacts;
- By municipalities in managing anticipated water supplies and drought mitigation;
- By reservoir operators to satisfy multiple use demands;
- To mitigate flood damages in levied areas and downstream from reservoirs; and
- To support fish and wildlife management activities associated with species protection legislation.

Water Supply Forecasting Technology Development. In cooperation with Portland State University (PSU), the NWCC developed a geo-spatial tool Basin Analysis GIS (BAGIS) for use in analyzing Western watersheds in order to locate the optimum locations for new climatic, SNOTEL sites. It is anticipated that BAGIS will aid NRCS staff

in selecting locations that will ultimately lead to a decrease in the errors in our water supply forecast models and provide better water supply guidance for Western water managers.

Climate Services Technology Development. The Agricultural Applied Climate Information System (AgACIS) is now a public asset used by NRCS at the USDA Service Centers. In FY 2010, the NWCC along with the National Hydraulic Engineer worked with individual States to implement the AgACIS module and expand the number of stations available in the system. Access is provided through the NRCS electronic Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG). Through AgACIS, users are able to access quality controlled data made available through the Regional Climate Centers from the National Climate Data Center in Asheville, North Carolina, along with specific analyses of that data including temperature, precipitation, growing season and frost evaluations. Tools were included that enabled the evaluation of climate change impacts.

Geo-spatial data products. Additional daily Parameter-elevation Regressions on Independent Slopes Model (PRISM), and geographical Information System (GIS), data layers were made available in FY 2010. Through a partnership between NRCS and the PRISM Group at Oregon State University, GIS temperature and precipitation data layers are available for the historical record from 1895 to 2009 at 800 meter resolution for the monthly data sets. NWCC also obtained the Western Canada PRISM information for the 1971 to 2000 period at four kilometer resolution. These layers are being incorporated into the BASIN analysis as layers for analysis.

Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI). Values were provided for the 2010 water year for incorporation into drought planning. These included maps for display at drought meetings and shape files for incorporation into the Upper Colorado River NIDIS operations.

Information Systems. The database and forecast system maintained by the NWCC, Water and Climate Information System (WCIS), supports a wide variety of software used for water supply forecasting, water and climate data analyses, and other products used in water resource management and related natural resource conservation activities at NRCS. NWCC websites containing snow survey data, water supply forecasts, soil moisture data and other products recorded over 2.4 million visits with 17.7 million files downloaded. The views and downloads of the information from State NRCS websites are similar to the information from other sites such as the National Weather Service website which utilize SSWSF data. The NWCC has developed and is implementing a failover plan, which includes migration to USDA hosting, for all data collection and product production activities. The databases and one application became operational on the Kansas City USDA Hosting site. Additional applications will be migrated to hosting in FY 2011. NWCC is currently developing the Product Data Portal which will provide Climate, Water Supply and Data interpretations information through data retrieval and data interpretations. Delivery will be to the general public and Service Centers through the respective web pages, FOTG, and CDSI interfaces.

Getting Conservation on the Ground.

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes: Water Conservation. In 2008, representatives of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes contacted the NRCS Water Supply Specialist in Montana to request assistance with water conservation efforts on Tribal lands. Over the last two years, NWCC staff hydrologists worked closely with Montana NRCS and Tribal staffs to collect data, identify key resource concerns and water management objectives, and develop water supply forecast models to support the Tribes water conservation plan. In FY 2010, NWCC staff issued water supply forecasts for five different rivers and streams on Tribal lands. This critical water supply information allowed Tribal water managers to more effectively support irrigated agricultural needs while simultaneously protecting native fish species.

Washington: Water quality improvement. In the fall of 2009, geologists working at the Buckhorn gold mine in northeastern Washington contacted NRCS Water Supply Specialist in Washington to request assistance with water quality monitoring efforts. The Water Supply Specialist worked with local NRCS field office staff, the Oregon State Office staff, and NWCC staff to develop a plan for installing a SNOTEL monitoring station with enhanced sensors to measure soil moisture, solar radiation, and wind speed and direction. The SNOTEL monitoring station was recently installed and is already providing data that are critical to water quality monitoring and modeling efforts.

With this data, the mine staff is making operational decisions to protect and preserve water quality in the headwaters of the Colville National Forest.

Alabama: SCAN station used for air quality compliance. Mr. David Hodges in Marshall County, northern Alabama, operates a large poultry farm. The closest weather station to his farm, which is in the mountains of northern Alabama, was at Huntsville approximately 40 miles away. The weather information from the station at Huntsville often indicated conditions that, based on EPA and State regulations, did not allow him to be able to pump his manure pit due to potential air and water quality violations (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations regulations). Using a nearby SCAN station, he is able to log onto the NWCC web site to determine the local conditions, which now allows him to determine when it is safe to pump his pit and spread manure. The 21 SCAN stations in Alabama were installed in cooperation with Alabama A&M University's Mesonet program.

Additional information on snow surveys, western water supply water year reviews, and other technical reports are available on the NWCC Web site, http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov.

PLANT MATERIALS CENTERS

Current Activities

Program Objectives. As part of the Plant Materials Program, NRCS operates or supports a network of 27 Plant Materials Centers (PMCs) that service all areas of the United States and its territories. Through its PMCs and plant materials specialists, the Plant Materials Program addresses natural resource concerns identified locally and nationally. Plant Materials staffs consolidate vegetative needs from locally based field staff and partners. Overarching national priorities, addressed through Plant Materials National Action Plans, include pollinator habitat, energy conservation, air quality, climate change, and transition-to-organic production. The resulting PMC activities focus on both "core" resource concerns such as soil stabilization and water quality, and on emerging national priorities such as biofeedstock production for energy production, enhancement of pollinator habitat to support agricultural production, and development of information and alternate procedures to assist producers involved in organic production.

PMCs: (1) develop technology for the effective establishment, use, and maintenance of plants; (2) assemble, test, select, and release seed and plants to provide for the commercial production of plant materials to protect and conserve our natural resources; (3) study and characterize plant attributes to provide data and information important in operation of predictive models and effective management of climate impacted plant resources; and (4) provide appropriate training and education to NRCS staff, partners, and the public.

Program Operations. The NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) delivers Plant Materials Program information directly to NRCS field staff and partners in conservation planning efforts. Plant Materials staff tailor vegetative information in FOTG to the unique conditions found in their service areas. Plant Materials staff also provide extensive training to field staff and partners on the appropriate selection and establishment of vegetation to address specific resource concerns. Program information is available to the public through the Web at http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov. Plant Materials Program information improves the condition of natural resources on both private and public lands. On private lands, program information supports the successful implementation of Farm Bill programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

The Plant Materials Program uses a multi-disciplinary approach to solving natural resource problems, utilizing expertise in biology, agronomy, forestry, soils, and horticulture. Plant Materials activities are coordinated with various NRCS technical specialties and with other governmental agencies, nongovernment organizations and industry. The program most often coordinates activities with the Agricultural Research Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management as well as with State and local agencies such as departments of transportation, wildlife, and conservation. Nongovernmental organizations include native plant societies, wildlife

organizations, and industry partners include commercial seed and plant growers. These partnerships expand the efforts by PMCs to accomplish work that would not be possible by PMCs acting alone as well as to disseminate technical information developed by PMCs.

The network of PMCs is the only national organization of its kind positioned to find and test vegetation to address our nation's natural resource challenges. Of the 27 Centers, NRCS directly operates 25; it provides funding or technical assistance to State or local governments to operate two additional facilities. Each PMC service area is defined by ecological boundaries. The Centers address high-priority conservation concerns within their service areas. When coordinating across service areas, PMCs evaluate vegetative technology and solutions that impact large regions of the United States.

FY 2010 Activities.

The conservation plant materials released by PMCs help restore the environment to a healthy condition after natural disasters and human induced disturbances. The technologies evaluated and developed help improve the production, establishment, and management of plants used in conservation systems. Release of new plants by PMCs to the private sector helps to stimulate the national economy and to increase the seed and plants necessary to implement Farm Bill conservation programs. It is estimated that commercial sales of the 500 most in-demand plants generate over $100 million a year in revenue. PMC activities directly benefit private landowners as well as Federal and State land managing agencies. FY 2010 activities include:

New Conservation Plants. PMCs released 11 new native conservation plants to commercial growers to provide locally adapted plants for soil stabilization, windbreaks and shelterbelts, range seeding, and wildlife habitat. These joined over 500 other conservation plants released by NRCS already available commercially for landowners and land managers to use in protecting and improving natural resources.

Technology Transfer. Plant Materials staff prepared over 300 new technical documents, which were added to the 1,700 documents already on the Plant Materials Web site. Altogether, these documents were utilized more than 1.5 million times by 381,000 visitors in FY 2010. Plant Materials staff conducted 107 training session for 3,500 field staff and conservation partners on seed and plant identification, selection, and establishment and on topics such as soil bioengineering, range plantings, and pollinator habitat.

Biofeedstock Evaluations. Across the country, PMCs are characterizing new plants for use as biofeedstocks and developing management methods to improve biofeedstock quality. The Big Flats, New York PMC, in cooperation with Cornell University, is evaluating 90 accessions of switchgrass and 88 accessions of big bluestem for biomass potential in the northeastern United States. The Kingsville, Texas PMC is evaluating the oil content of native legumes; two native legume species with oil content similar to soybeans suggests there may be potential for biofuel production from native legumes in crop rotation systems. A three-year study involving 11 PMCs in the western and northern United States found that tall wheatgrass cultivars were most productive in California, averaging 4.5 – 6.8 tons per acre, and may have potential as a cool-season biofeedstock crop on saline soils. Studies at the Knox City, Texas, and Elsberry, Missouri PMCs have found that leaving native warm-season grasses, such as switchgrass, big bluestem, and indiangrass, standing in the field to weather for 12 or more weeks after seed maturity improved the quality of the biofeedstock for direct combustion. PMCs throughout the country are evaluating species and selections of grasses and woody plants for their areas and making recommendations that meet the needs of the emerging biofeedstock industry while protecting the nation's natural resources.

Pollinator Habitat. Most PMCs are actively engaged in improving habitat recommendations for native and managed plant pollinators. In FY 2010, PMCs in Florida, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington updated lists of recommended wildflower and legume species used by field staff for planning high-quality pollinator habitat for conservation programs such as CRP, EQIP, and WHIP. In addition, the Plant Materials Program characterized the pollinator benefits of 80 native wildflowers and legumes already released to commercial growers. PMCs in Arizona, California, Georgia, Maryland, Minnesota, Michigan, Montana, and Oregon are studying methods of establishment and management of pollinator plantings to improve landowner success. PMCs engage with partners such as The Xerces Society, Pollinator Partnership, and local universities to look at floral

visitation by pollinators; they establish demonstrations and provide training as part of NRCS outreach efforts to raise awareness and improve the dissemination of information to field staff, conservation partners, and the public.

Beneficial Cover Crops**.** 'Tropic Sun' sunn hemp (*Crotalaria juncea*), released by the Ho'olehua, Hawaii, PMC in 1982 as a green manure crop to benefit the soil, is now being studied by PMCs across the country for its potential use in crop rotations to suppress weeds, reduce root-knot nematode populations, improve soil quality, and produce nitrogen for subsequent crops. Attention is being paid to refining the area in which this subtropical legume can be adapted and defining optimum seeding rates. In Louisiana, planting 'Tropic Sun' before a crop of sugar cane significantly reduced nitrogen applications for the first year of sugar cane production. The Manhattan, Kansas PMC is studying a rotation with winter wheat. Various PMCs are looking at sunn hemp's significant potential for use in organic production systems. Together, these efforts highlight the particular capacity of the Plant Materials Program and its network of PMCs to study new applications and emerging technologies throughout the diverse landscapes of the United States.

Plant Growth Data Collection. In collaboration with the NRCS Resources Inventory and Assessment Division and the Agricultural Research Service, PMCs in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and Washington began a coordinated effort in FY 2010 to collect plant growth data to improve the precision of the Agricultural Land Management Alternatives with Numerical Assessment Criteria (ALMANAC) model. These PMCs are utilizing new technology to measure the light intercepted by leaf cover of range plant species and correlate the light to plant growth rate. The work related specifically to the ALMANAC model will continue over the next two years and will focus on documenting growth parameters of major western plant species. ALMANAC is used in the analysis of grazing lands conservation effects as well as by field staff in conservation planning activities.

Working in Partnership. PMCs nationwide are engaged in cooperative activities with partners to extend the capabilities of the Plant Materials Program. The Cape May, New Jersey, PMC is working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to develop specifications for seeding marsh grasses, which will be less costly than re-vegetating newly created barrier islands with plants. The Corvallis, Oregon PMC is working with the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service to develop seeding specifications for stabilizing forest roadbeds and landscapes on public and private woodlands. The Booneville, Arkansas PMC with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, is studying the establishment of native species in disturbed areas and developing specifications for reseeding roadsides and reclaiming surface mines in Oklahoma and Arkansas.

Getting Conservation on the Ground. New Conservation Plants Benefit Pollinator Habitat and Provide Other Benefits. The nationwide focus by PMCs on pollinator habitat has provided NRCS field staff with the information and tools needed to plan and implement high-quality pollinator habitat. In FY 2010, PMCs released several new conservation plants, such as Monarch Germplasm seaside goldenrod by the Cape May, New Jersey PMC, for soil stabilization that will also greatly benefit pollinator habitat. Many of the PMC studies focused on the use of native plants to improve habitat for native bees and other pollinators used in natural systems, and the use of native and introduced plants to support managed bee populations used in agricultural production. The information generated by PMCs was disseminated through FOTG and the Web in over 15 new technical documents. Over 20 training sessions and presentations, often with partners such as The Xerces Society, delivered information to field staff and conservation partners who will be implementing the enhancement of pollinator habitat through Farm Bill programs. The result of these efforts is a healthy and diverse mix of plants that not only supports pollinators, but stabilizes soil, filters nutrients, attracts other wildlife, and improves the overall ecosystem services of NRCS's conservation plantings.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations

	Watersheds Authorized by P.L. 78-534	Small Watersheds Authorized by P.L. 83-566	Total Watershed and Flood Prevention
Annualized 2011 Continuing Resolution	$5,146,000	$24,854,000	$30,000,000
Budget Estimate, 2012	--	--	--
Decrease in Appropriations	-5,146,000	-24,854,000	-30,000,000

Summary of Increases and Decreases
(On basis of appropriation)

Item of Change	2011 Estimated	Pay Costs	Program Changes	2012 Estimated
Watershed & Flood Prevention – Regular Appropriation:				
1. Watershed Oper. Auth. by P.L. 78-534	$5,146,000	--	-$5,146,000	--
2. Small Watershed Auth. by P.L. 83-566	24,854,000	--	-24,854,000	--
Total Available	30,000,000	--	-30,000,000	--

Project Statement
(On basis of appropriation)

Program	2010 Actual Amount	2010 Actual Staff Years	2011 Estimated Amount	2011 Estimated Staff Years	Increase or Decrease	2012 Estimated Amount	2012 Estimated Staff Years
Watershed & Flood Prevention – Regular Appropriation:							
1. Watershed Operations							
Authorized by P.L. 78-534:							
(a) Technical assistance	$1,030,000	5	$1,030,000	33	-$1,030,000	--	--
(b) Financial assistance	4,116,000	--	4,116,000	--	-4,116,000	--	--
Subtotal, P.L. 78-534	5,146,000	5	5,146,000	33	-5,146,000	--	--
2. Small Watersheds							
Authorized by P.L. 83-566:							
(a) Technical assistance	7,032,000	28	7,032,000	87	-7,032,000	--	--
(b) Financial assistance	17,822,000	--	17,822,000	--	-17,822,000	--	--
Subtotal, P.L. 83-566	24,854,000	28	24,854,000	87	-24,854,000	--	--
Total, Appropriation	30,000,000	33	30,000,000	120	-30,000,000	--	--

Program	2010 Actual Amount	2010 Actual Staff Years	2011 Estimated Amount	2011 Estimated Staff Years	Increase or Decrease	2012 Estimated Amount	2012 Estimated Staff Years
Watershed & Flood Prevention – Supplemental Appropriations:							
1. Emergency Watershed							
Protection Operations:							
(a) Technical assistance...	--:	140:	--:	113:	--:	--:	--
(b) Financial assistance....	--:	--:	--:	--:	--:	--:	--
Total, Appropriation.....	--:	140:	--:	113:	--:	--:	--

Project Statement
(On basis of available funds)

Program	2010 Actual Amount	2010 Actual Staff Years	2011 Estimated Amount	2011 Estimated Staff Years	Increase or Decrease	2012 Estimated Amount	2012 Estimated Staff Years
Watershed & Flood Prevention – Regular Appropriation:							
1. Watershed Operations							
Authorized by P.L. 78-534:							
(a) Technical assistance.	$551,800:	5:	$2,979,540:	33:	-$2,979,540:	--:	--
(b) Financial assistance..	997,008:	--:	14,419,000:	--:	-14,419,000:	--:	--
Subtotal, P.L. 78-534....	1,548,808:	5:	17,398,540:	33:	-17,398,540:	--:	--
2. Small Watersheds							
Authorized by P.L. 83-566:							
(a) Technical assistance.	6,455,576:	28:	14,271,431:	87:	-14,271,431:	--:	--
(b) Financial assistance..	15,802,298:	--:	36,696,000:	--:	-36,696,000:	--:	--
Subtotal, P.L. 83-566.....	22,257,874:	28:	50,967,431:	87:	-50,967,431:	--:	--
Total Direct Obligations...	23,806,682:	33:	68,365,971:	120:	-68,365,971:	--:	--
Unobligated Balance							
Brought Forward	(-84,937,453)	--:	(-81,737,629)	--:	(+38,365,971)	(-43,371,658)	--
Prior Year Recoveries.....	(-7,935,291)	--:	--:	--:	--:	--:	--
Offsetting Collections.....	(-7,183,220)	--:	--:	--:	--:	--:	--
Reimbursements	(+36,555,948)	--:	--:	--:	--:	--:	--
Chg in Customer Payments	(-12,044,295)	--:	--:	--:	--:	--:	--
Not Available Carried Fwd	--:	--:	(+43,371,658)	--:		(+43,371,658)	
Unobligated Balance							
Carried Forward.....	(+81,737,629)	--:	--:	--:	--:	--:	--
Adjusted Appropriation....	(30,000,000)	--:	(30,000,000)	--:	(-30,000,000)	--:	--
Reimbursable Obligations:							
1. Watershed Operations							
Authorized by P.L. 78-534:							
Subtotal, P.L. 78-534....	459,145:	1:	500,000:	1:	-500,000:	--:	--
2. Small Watersheds							
Authorized by P.L. 83-566:							
Subtotal, P.L. 83-566.....	36,096,803:	28:	40,000,000:	28:	-40,000,000:	--:	--
Total Reimbursable Oblig.	36,555,948:	29:	40,500,000:	29:	-40,500,000:	--:	--
Obligational Authority.....	60,362,630:	62:	108,865,971:	149:	-108,865,971:	--:	--

Program	2010 Actual Amount	2010 Actual Staff Years	2011 Estimated Amount	2011 Estimated Staff Years	Increase or Decrease	2012 Estimated Amount	2012 Estimated Staff Years
Watershed & Flood Prevention – Supplemental Appropriation:							
1. Emergency Watershed	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Protection Operations:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
(a) Technical assistance.	$24,744,810:	140:	$20,242,415:	113:	-$20,242,415:	--:	--
(b) Financial assistance..	200,127,427:	--:	80,975,000:	--:	-80,975,000:	--:	--
Total Direct Obligations….	224,872,237:	140:	101,217,415:	113:	-101,217,415:	--:	--
Unobligated Balance	:	:	:	:	:	:	
Brought Forward	(-328,399,514)	--:	(-133,348,897)	--:	(+101,217,415):	(-31,500,000):	--
Prior Year Recoveries.....	(-25,164,783)	--:	--:	--:	--:	--:	--
Offsetting Collections.....	(-1,289,182)	--:	--:	--:	--:	--:	--
Reimbursements	(+631,482)	--:	--:	--:	--:	--:	--
Chg in Customer Payments	(-3,999,137)	--:	--:	--:	--:	--:	--
Not Available Carried Fwd	--:	--:	(+631,482):	--:	(-631,482):	--:	--
Unobligated Balance	:	:	:	:	:	:	
Carried Forward.....	(+133,348,897)	--:	(+31,500,000):	--:	--:	(+31,500,000):	--
Adjusted Appropriation	--:	--:	--:	--:	--:	--:	--
Reimbursable Obligations:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
1. Emergency Watershed	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Protection Operations:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Subtotal, EWP	339,248:	3:	3,500,000:	15:	-3,500,000:	--:	--
2. EPA Great Lakes	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Restoration Initiative:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Subtotal, EPA	292,234:	--:	--:	--:	--:	--:	--
Total Reimbursable Oblig.	631,482:	3:	3,500,000:	15:	-3,500,000:	--:	--
Obligational Authority.....	225,503,719:	143:	104,717,415:	128:	-104,717,415:	--:	--

Justification of Increases and Decreases

(1) A decrease of $30,000,000 for the Watershed and Flood Prevention Operation Program ($30,000,000 available in 2011):

(a) A decrease of $5,146,000 for Watershed Operations Authorized by P.L. 78-534 ($5,146,000 available in 2011):

Due to budget priorities, the fiscal year 2012 budget proposes to terminate funding for this program.

(b) A decrease of $24,854,000 for Small Watersheds Authorized by P.L. 83-566 ($24,854,000 available in 2011):

Due to budget priorities, the fiscal year 2012 budget proposes to terminate funding for this program.

Status of P.L. 78-534 watershed projects:

Status of Operational Projects	2010	2011	2012
Active sub-watersheds...	70	69	--
Projects continuing post-installation assistance	207	206	--
Total operational sub-watersheds	277	275	--
Inactive projects	91	91	--
De-authorized projects...	25	25	--
Total sub-watersheds	393	391	--

Status of P.L. 83-566 watershed projects:

Status of Operational Projects	2010	2011	2012
Land treatment projects	83	103	--
Structural projects	125	153	--
Land treatment and structural	52	63	--
Subtotal active projects	260	319	--
Projects in post-installation assistance	1,084	1,066	--
Inactive Projects	200	191	--
Project Life Completed	50	42	--
De-authorized projects	158	158	--
Total operational projects	1,752	1,776	--
New projects approved during year	2	1	--

Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years
2010 Actual and Estimated 2011 and 2012

	2010		2011		2012	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years
Alabama	$3,798,047	2	$577,392	1	--	--
Alaska	7,348,665	1	10,608,573	16	--	--
Arizona	7,140,032	1	590,275	2	--	--
Arkansas	3,150,048	7	320,100	1	--	--
California	2,598,790	6	5,632,037	5	--	--
Colorado	50,101	--	1,433,500	1	--	--
Connecticut	500,000	--	--	--	--	--
Florida	20,767,188	9	767,835	3	--	--
Georgia	1,804,057	2	5,585,525	2	--	--
Hawaii	9,662,268	6	2,241,138	7	--	--

	2010		2011		2012	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years
Idaho	9,641	--	--	--	--	--
Illinois	1,173,605	1	6,000	--	--	--
Indiana	449,980	1	96,516	--	--	--
Iowa	48,177,531	10	2,241,722	2	--	--
Kansas	515,558	1	57,000	--	--	--
Kentucky	14,911,659	21	8,234,340	10	--	--
Louisiana	5,399,004	6	--	--	--	--
Maine	361,060	--	11,879	--	--	--
Massachusetts	364,499	--	415,900	1	--	--
Michigan	18,420	--	--	--	--	--
Minnesota	559,039	1	30,000	--	--	--
Mississippi	15,865,409	18	3,725,030	9	--	--
Missouri	26,163,059	30	11,091,705	6	--	--
Montana	356,054	--	--	--	--	--
Nebraska	137,424	--	--	--	--	--
Nevada	1,452	--	--	--	--	--
New Hampshire	6,465	--	1,227,469	1	--	--
New Mexico	175,507	1	--	--	--	--
New York	4,698,737	2	2,661,758	2	--	--
North Carolina	1,306,428	1	91,610	1	--	--
North Dakota	3,515,094	2	744,746	2	--	--
Ohio	194,825	2	333,300	--	--	--
Oklahoma	3,649,313	7	2,455,809	4	--	--
Oregon	568,477	--	31,523	--	--	--
Pennsylvania	619,587	--	78,250	--	--	--
Rhode Island	2,183,911	1	1,500,565	3	--	--
South Carolina	1,077,031	--	81,500	--	--	--
South Dakota	--	--	229,950	1	--	--
Tennessee	8,239,952	5	18,449,946	17	--	--
Texas	7,745,620	14	7,581,661	13	--	--
Utah	37,022,017	7	2,018,000	4	--	--
Vermont	49,485	--	--	--	--	--
Virginia	276,925	2	329,272	1	--	--
Washington	18,273	--	--	--	--	--
West Virginia	4,381,524	4	18,778,033	21	--	--
Wisconsin	145,031	1	144,000	--	--	--
Wyoming	870,046	1	155,000	--	--	--
National Hdqtr	618,819	--	334,000	2	--	--
National Centers	33,262	--	--	--	--	--
Undistributed	--	--	58,690,527	95	--	--
Total Obligations/Est.	248,678,919	173	169,583,386	233	--	--

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations

Classification by Objects
2010 Actual and Estimated 2011 and 2012

Personnel Compensation:		2010	2011	2012
Washington, D.C.		$169,562	$170,830	--
Field		12,518,404	16,912,170	--
11	Total personnel compensation	12,687,966	17,083,000	--
12	Personnel benefits	3,557,200	5,046,000	--
13	Benefits for former personnel	--	--	--
	Total pers. comp. & benefits	16,245,166	22,129,000	--
Other Objects:				
21	Travel	477,161	457,000	--
22	Transportation of things	41,957	46,000	--
23.1	Rent payments to GSA	--	--	--
23.2	Rental payments to others	265,292	310,000	--
23.3	Communications, utilities, and misc. charges	271,497	186,000	--
24	Printing and reproduction	9,574	7,000	--
25.1	Advisory and assistance services	2,066,699	1,694,000	--
25.2	Other services	10,285,305	10,444,000	--
25.2	Construction contracts	77,458,133	41,393,000	--
26	Supplies and materials	95,453	150,000	--
31	Equipment	1,819,666	2,055,000	--
32	Land and structures	41,676,491	28,353,000	--
41	Grants	97,950,252	62,344,386	--
42	Insurance and loans	--	--	--
43	Interest and dividends	16,273	15,000	--
44	Refunds	--	--	--
	Total other objects	232,433,753	147,454,386	--
Total, direct obligations		248,678,919	169,583,386	--

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations

SUMMARY OF RECOVERY ACT FUNDING

Item of Change	2010	2011	2012
Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations	--	--	--

Project Statement – Recovery Act
(On basis of available funds)

Program	2010 Actual Amount	2010 Actual Staff Years	2011 Estimated Amount	2011 Estimated Staff Years	Increase or Decrease	2012 Estimated Amount	2012 Estimated Staff Years
1. Watershed & Flood Prevention Recovery							
Technical Assistance	$26,606,451	132	--	--	--	--	--
Financial Assistance	80,443,851	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total Direct Obligations ...	107,050,302	132	--	--	---	--	--
Unobligated balance brought forward	(-104,940,857)		--		--	--	--
Prior Year Recoveries.....	(-3,255,982)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Unobligated Expiring Balance ……	(+1,146,537)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Adjusted Appropriation …	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Reimbursable Oblig.....	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Obligational Authority.....	107,050,302	132	--	--	--	--	--
2. Watershed Floodplain Easements Recovery							
Technical Assistance	$9,667,946	70	--	--	--	--	--
Financial Assistance	63,988,732	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total Direct Obligations ...	73,656,678	70	--	--	--	--	--
Unobligated balance brought forward	(-65,177,075)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Prior Year Recoveries.....	(-9,048,109)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Unobligated Expiring Balance ……..(+568,506)		--	--	--	--	--	--
Adjusted Appropriation	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Reimbursable Oblig.....	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Obligational Authority.....	73,656,678	70	--	--	---	--	--
Total Direct Obligations ...	180,706,980	202	--	--	--	--	--

Program Implementation Activities:
Goals and Coordination Efforts: This voluntary program provides assistance to sponsoring local organizations of authorized watershed projects, planned and approved under the authority of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954 (P.L. 83-566), and designated watersheds authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1944 (P.L. 78-534) (referred to as "Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO)"). NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to States, local governments, and Tribes (as project sponsors) to implement authorized watershed project plans for the purpose of watershed protection; flood mitigation; water quality improvements; soil erosion reduction; rural, municipal and industrial water supply; irrigation water management; sediment control; fish and wildlife enhancement; and wetlands and wetland function creation and restoration. There are over 1,500 active or completed watershed projects.

Floodplain easements restore, protect, maintain, and enhance the functions of the floodplain; conserve natural values including fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, flood water retention, ground water recharge, and open space; reduce long-term Federal disaster assistance; and safeguard lives and property from floods, drought, and the products of erosion. Landowners retain several rights to the property, including quiet enjoyment, the right to control public access, and the right to undeveloped recreational use such as hunting and fishing.

Program Objectives: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), WFPO funds provided watershed project sponsors with financial and technical support that allowed completion of mitigation obligations or structural repairs, or that involve land treatment projects. ARRA funds were used for new construction projects that are already authorized for construction, are environmentally beneficial, and that are owned or operated by sponsors that are ready and able to begin work.

For floodplain easements, the objective is to enroll floodplain lands that will link or extend other floodplain or riparian conservation easements or protected areas, provide benefits to Federal or State listed threatened and endangered species, result in flood damage reduction, and are not likely to involve environmental or legal complications.

Delivery Schedule:

WFPO milestones:

1 USDA approval of funding recommendations: April 2009
2 Allocation of funds to NRCS State Offices: April 2009
3 Total obligation of all WFPO funds: September 2010

Floodplain easement milestones:

- Application period closes: May 2009
- Projects ranked: June 2009
- Offers to purchase easements made: July 2009
- Easements recorded and closed: February 2011
- Easement restoration funds obligated: September 2010
- Easement restoration completed: December 2011

Performance Measures:

	Performance Target		
	2010 Actual	2011 Target	2012 Target
Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations			
Number of jobs created or saved	1,039	1,931	--
Flood prevention or mitigation measures installed, number	33	300	--
Watershed Floodplain Easements			
Number of jobs created or saved	1,773	1,216	--
EWP floodplain easements closed, acres	27,060	11,442	--

Note: Jobs created or saved were developed by using IMPLAN, designed by the USDA Forest Service, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and USDOI Bureau of Land Management.

Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years
2010 Actual and Estimated 2011 and 2012

	2010		2011		2012	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years
Alabama	$614,638	2	--	--	--	--
Alaska	1,334,915	1	--	--	--	--
Arkansas	3,286,309	7	--	--	--	--
California	22,510,193	11	--	--	--	--
Colorado	1,465,397	4	--	--	--	--
Georgia	747,553	2	--	--	--	--
Hawaii	2,840,690	3	--	--	--	--
Idaho	242,454	1	--	--	--	--
Illinois	4,073,135	6	--	--	--	--
Indiana	6,477,385	6	--	--	--	--
Iowa	6,539,532	8	--	--	--	--
Kansas	1,848,597	2	--	--	--	--
Kentucky	14,413,049	7	--	--	--	--
Louisiana	4,384,199	4	--	--	--	--
Maine	699,956	--	--	--	--	--
Massachusetts	6,500,298	1	--	--	--	--
Michigan	58,328	--	--	--	--	--
Minnesota	361,723	1	--	--	--	--
Mississippi	4,494,997	19	--	--	--	--
Missouri	4,924,527	23	--	--	--	--
Montana	269,053	1	--	--	--	--
Nebraska	4,442,317	5	--	--	--	--
New Hampshire	300,887	1	--	--	--	--
New Jersey	182,162	1	--	--	--	--
New Mexico	1,587,679	2	--	--	--	--
New York	839,168	2	--	--	--	--
North Carolina	3,350,435	4	--	--	--	--
North Dakota	9,664,565	1	--	--	--	--
Ohio	5,299,247	5	--	--	--	--
Oklahoma	4,677,665	7	--	--	--	--
Oregon	956,054	1	--	--	--	--
Pennsylvania	2,960,032	4	--	--	--	--
Rhode Island	2,044,742	1	--	--	--	--
South Carolina	2,798,832	--	--	--	--	--
South Dakota	596,696	--	--	--	--	--
Tennessee	14,795,277	15	--	--	--	--
Texas	8,952,716	12	--	--	--	--
Virginia	847,392	4	--	--	--	--
Washington	803,662	2	--	--	--	--
West Virginia	21,324,121	15	--	--	--	--
Wisconsin	5,263,231	6	--	--	--	--
National Hdqtr	665,830	3	--	--	--	--
National Centers	267,340	2	--	--	--	--
Total Obligations/Est.	180,706,980	202	--	--	--	--

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
WATERSHED AND FLOOD PREVENTION OPERATIONS

STATUS OF PROGRAM

Current Activities

Background. Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations includes Flood Prevention Operations authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1944 (P.L. 78-534) and the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (P.L. 83-566; 16 U.S.C 1001-1008). This program authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to provide technical and financial assistance to entities of State and local governments and Tribes (project sponsors) for planning and installing watershed projects.

Program Objectives. The Flood Control Act authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to install watershed improvement measures in 11 watersheds to reduce flood, sedimentation, and erosion damage; improve the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water; and advance the conservation and proper utilization of land. Working in cooperation with soil conservation districts and other local sponsoring organizations, NRCS prepares detailed sub-watershed plans that outline soil and water management problems and proposals to alleviate the problems, including estimated benefits and costs, cost-sharing arrangements, and operation and maintenance arrangements.

The Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act provides for cooperation between the Federal government and the States and their political subdivisions in a program to prevent erosion, floodwater, and sediment damage; to further the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water; and to further the conservation and proper utilization of land in authorized watersheds.

Program Operations. The planning criteria, economic justifications, local sponsorship requirements, cost-sharing criteria, structural limitations, and other policies and procedures under the Flood Control Act and the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act generally parallel each other. NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to install watershed improvement measures through three means: technical assistance, land treatment measures, and easement and construction measures.

Technical Assistance. NRCS provides technical assistance for flood mitigation, agricultural water management, water quality, and water resource development or improvement for public fish and wildlife and recreational purposes. It provides the assistance either directly or by making advance payments to or reimbursing the local sponsoring organization. NRCS may also supply up to one-half the cost of engineering assistance required to install basic facilities for public fish and wildlife and recreational development. Conservation measures may be installed using a variety of contracting methods. Contracts may be administered by NRCS using formal contracting procedures or by the sponsoring local organizations. Local sponsoring organizations must operate and maintain the completed works of improvement on non-Federal lands for the length of time that the project is economically evaluated (usually between 25 and 100 years).

Land Treatment Measures. A basic requirement for assistance in the development of flood prevention sub-watershed or watershed projects is that a program of proper land use and treatment will be carried out. Proper land use and treatment (Land Treatment Measures) includes measures needed to develop and conserve the soil, water, woodland, wildlife, energy, and recreational resources of the land, and to enhance water quality. NRCS provides landowners and operators with technical assistance to accelerate the planning and application of land treatment measures that help achieve project objectives; this is in addition to technical assistance under other conservation programs.

Federal financial assistance may be applied to installation costs when land treatment measures are installed primarily to achieve environmental and public benefits such as surface and ground water quality improvement, water conservation, and flood mitigation. The Federal share may not exceed the rate of assistance for similar practices under other USDA conservation programs. Land treatment measures are installed through project agreements with local sponsoring organizations or through long-term contracts between the landowner and NRCS. In the first case,

the local sponsors arrange for and accomplish the work by contract or force account, and NRCS makes payments to the local sponsoring organizations as the land treatment measures are installed. In the second case, NRCS contracts directly with landowners.

Easement and Construction Activities. Easement and construction projects involve a wide variety of activities: floodwater retarding dams, flood-proofing of buildings located in a floodplain, and floodplain easements; water supply and water conservation; stream channel restoration; grade stabilization and sediment control; fish and wildlife habitat; water-based recreation, and other similar measures. NRCS, a private contractor, or the local sponsoring organization prepares detailed construction plans, designs, and specifications.

NRCS provides all construction funds for flood mitigation and a percentage of the cost of installing improvements for agricultural water management, fish and wildlife, water quality, or recreational development. Funded recreational development costs include basic facilities for public health and safety, access to recreational areas, and use of the recreational development. Local organizations must pay all costs of improvements for other purposes. In addition, local organizations must acquire water rights permits and furnish land, easements, and rights-of-way for all structural measures. NRCS provides up to one-half the cost of land, easements, and rights-of-way allocated to public fish and wildlife and recreational developments, and between 50 and 99 percent of the cost of purchasing conservation easements.

FY 2010 Activities.

The flood prevention and other activities of the Flood Control Act and the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act provided the following estimated cumulative benefits in FY 2010.

Monetary Benefits

- Agricultural benefits not related to flood prevention: $409 million. Benefits associated with erosion control, animal waste management, water conservation, water quality improvement, irrigation efficiency, change in land use, etc.
- Non-agricultural benefits not related to flood prevention: $899 million. Benefits associated with recreation, fish and wildlife, rural water supply, water quality, municipal and industrial water supply, and incidental recreation uses, etc.
- Agricultural flood prevention benefits: $320 million. This value includes all crop and pasture damage reduction benefits as well as all other agricultural damage reduction benefits.
- Non-agricultural flood prevention benefits: $434 million. Non-agricultural flood damage prevented to roads, bridges, homes, and other structures that exist in the floodplain.

Environmental Benefits

- Acres of nutrient management: 674,283
- Tons of animal waste properly disposed: 4,801,640
- Tons of soil saved from erosion: 90,038,700
- Miles of streams and corridors enhanced or protected: 54,190
- Acres of lakes and reservoirs enhanced or protected: 2,518,613
- Acre-feet of water conserved: 1,842,813
- Acres of wetlands created, enhanced, or restored: 279,326
- Acres of upland wildlife habitat created, enhanced, or restored: 9,149,776

Social and Community Benefits

- Number of people impacted: 48,316,354
- Number of farms and ranches: 181,248
- Number of bridges: 61,678
- Number of public facilities: 3,650
- Number of businesses: 46,583
- Number of homes: 610,983
- Number of domestic water supplies: 27,857

Status of Flood Prevention Projects Authorized by the Flood Control Act. Because the 11 authorized flood prevention projects include relatively large areas, work plans were developed on a sub-watershed basis. As of September 30, 2010, the total planning job was about 96 percent completed, with work in 397 plans covering approximately 30 million acres fully concluded. The following table summarizes the status of sub-watershed planning by authorized project:

Flood Prevention Project	Total Authorized Area	Potential Sub-watersheds		Project Plans Completed through 9/30/10	
	Acres	No. of Plans	Acres	No. of Plans	Acres
Buffalo Creek, NY [a/]	279,680	3	279,680	3	279,680
Middle Colorado, TX	4,613,120	17	3,703,520	17	3,703,520
Coosa, GA,TN [a/]	1,339,400	16	1,174,650	16	1,174,650
Little Sioux, IA	1,740,800	124	1,050,093	122	1,033,578
Little Tallahatchie, MS	963,977	18	625,274 [b/]	18	625,274
Los Angeles, CA [a/]	536,960	10	127,627 [c/]	10	127,627
Potomac, MD,PA,VA,WV	4,205,400	31	4,205,400	30	3,094,543
Santa Ynez, CA	576,000	5	50,743 [d/]	5	50,743
Trinity, TX	10,769,266	36	10,769,266	36	10,769,266
Washita, OK, TX	5,184,362	57	5,184,362	57	5,184,362
Yazoo, MS	7,661,278	125	4,061,424	125	4,061,424
TOTAL	37,870,243	442	31,232,039	439	30,104,667

[a/] The Buffalo Creek Watershed was completed and closed in 1964 and reopened in 1992 for repairs. The Coosa Watershed was completed and closed in 1981. The Los Angeles Watershed is completed.
[b/] Does not include 96,501 acres of Sardis Reservoir area, and 304,000 acres in minor watersheds needing only land treatment measures.
[c/] Includes National forest and other lands for which the Forest Service has been assigned program responsibility.
[d/] Does not include 195,818 acres of reservoir area.

The estimated Federal cost for each watershed and total Federal obligations through FY 2010 are shown in the table below:

Flood Prevention Project	Estimated total Federal cost	Obligations (cumulative $)
Buffalo Creek Watershed, NY a/ (Complete)	$7,827,746	$6,287,347
Middle Colorado River Watershed, TX	71,111,062	63,062,555
Coosa River Watershed, GA, TN a/ (Complete)	18,999,247	18,264,485
Little Sioux River Watershed, IA	98,581,921	94,684,419
Little Tallahatchie River Watershed, MS	69,501,448	76,322,835
Los Angeles River Watershed, CA a/	60,597,017	60,297,017
Potomac River Watershed, MD, PA, VA, WV	201,227,958	149,384,300
Santa Ynez River Watershed, CA	41,386,536	40,786,536
Trinity River Watershed, TX	331,241,632	211,178,950
Washita River Watershed, OK, TX	202,491,055	192,920,603
Yazoo River Watershed, MS	252,957,352	251,468,563
TOTAL	1,355,922,974	1,164,657,610

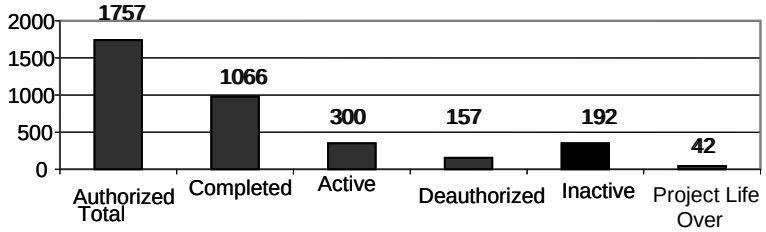
[a/] The Buffalo Creek Watershed was completed and closed in 1964 and reopened in 1992 for repairs. The Coosa Watershed was completed and closed in 1981. The Los Angeles Watershed is completed.

Status of Watershed Projects Authorized by the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act. Watershed project plans are prepared by local sponsoring organizations with assistance from NRCS. The plans are submitted to

NRCS with requests for Federal funding authorization. Watershed projects involving an estimated Federal contribution in excess of $5 million for construction, or construction of any single structure having a capacity in excess of 2,500 acre-feet of water storage, require authorization by Congressional committee. The Chief of NRCS authorizes the use of Watershed Operations funds for all other projects. Watershed projects are limited to 250,000 acres and cannot include any single structure that provides more than 12,500 acre-feet of floodwater detention capacity, or more than 25,000 acre-feet of total capacity.

After authorization, technical and financial assistance may be provided to local sponsoring organizations for installation of work specified in the plans. At the end of FY 2010, of the 1,757 projects authorized by the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, 1,066 have been completed, 300 remain active, with the others deauthorized or inactive, as the table below shows.

FY 2010 P.L.83-566 Watersheds Project Status



New Watershed Projects Authorized for Funding. Three new projects were authorized in FY 2010 for funding under the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, as shown below.

State	Project Name	Federal Share	Local Share	Total Cost
Nebraska	City of Wilber Flood Prevention Project	$950,000	$75,600	$1,025,600
Massachusetts	Cape Cod Water Resources Restoration Project	23,960,000	5,900,000	29,860,000
West Virginia	Dunloup Creek Watershed	12,600,000	1,400,000	14,000,000
Total		37,510,000	7,375,600	44,885,600

Unfunded Authorized Projects (Total Backlog of Projects). The backlog is the unfunded authorized projects or funding needed to install the remaining measures in the 300 active watershed projects. The current backlog is $921 million. When installed, these floodwater dams, reservoirs, and other conservation practices will reduce potential flood damages in 300 communities, provide agricultural water supply in 78 communities, improve water quality in 148 stream segments, install water conservation measures in 22 projects, and enhance, restore or create wildlife habitat in 65 projects.

Unfunded Authorized Watershed Projects

State	P.L. 83-566 Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention ($)	P.L. 78-534 Flood Control Act ($)	Total ($)
Alabama	--	$3,620,000	$3,620,000
Alaska	--	15,000,000	15,000,000
Arkansas	--	49,356,129	49,356,129
California	--	21,373,000	21,373,000
Colorado	--	6,170,000	6,170,000
Hawaii	--	33,325,000	33,325,000
Indiana	--	4,500,000	4,500,000
Iowa	$7,300,000	36,515,000	43,815,000
Kansas	--	36,732,700	36,732,700
Louisiana	--	3,750,000	3,750,000
Massachusetts	--	23,960,000	23,960,000
Minnesota	--	1,327,400	1,327,400
Mississippi	38,094,100	7,000,000	45,094,100
Missouri	--	111,230,000	111,230,000
Montana	--	3,664,500	3,664,500
Nebraska	--	2,000,000	2,000,000
New Mexico	--	7,189,500	7,189,500
New York	--	10,537,557	10,537,557
North Carolina	--	22,303,280	22,303,280
North Dakota	--	7,870,000	7,870,000
Ohio	--	13,555,000	13,555,000
Oklahoma	3,357,100	122,910,000	126,267,100
Oregon	--	430,000	430,000
Pennsylvania	--	8,135,000	8,135,000
Tennessee	--	19,152,326	19,152,326
Texas	139,200,000	105,854,000	245,054,000
Virginia	--	9,552,146	9,552,146
West Virginia	26,089,541	17,025,000	43,114,541
Wyoming	--	850,800	850,800
Pacific Basin	--	2,150,000	2,150,000
Total	214,040,741	707,038,338	921,079,079

Loan Programs under the Flood Control Act and the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act. Both programs provide for loans and loan services to finance the local share of the costs of installing, repairing, or enhancing works of improvement and water storage facilities; purchasing sites or rights-of-way; and other costs in approved watershed and flood prevention projects. Repayment with interest is required within 50 years after the principal benefits of improvements first become available. The interest rate is not to exceed the current market yield for outstanding municipal obligations, with remaining periods to maturity on obligations of similar maturity. For a single plan for works of improvement, the amount of the loan may not exceed ten million dollars. Loans are financed through the Rural Utilities Service.

As of the end of FY 2010, 58 borrowers held loans with an unpaid principal amount of $13.7 million. Over the life of the program, 495 loans have been made at a value of almost $176 million. Congress did not appropriate funds in FY 2010 to provide new loans under this program.

Getting Conservation on the Ground.

Iowa: Soap Creek Watershed. The Soap Creek Watershed project in Appanoose, Davis, Monroe and Wapello Counties in southeastern Iowa (Congressional District 2) was planned to reduce flood-related damages to rural roads, bridges, and farmland. Authorized in 1989, the project is sponsored by the county governments and conservation districts in the four-county area. The landscape in the project area is gently rolling to steep and has been subject to frequent flash flooding in the past. Land use is dominated by pastureland, row crop farming, and scattered tracts of woodland.

Of the 152 planned small flood detention dams, 121 have been completed, including four in FY 2010. Additional dams are under construction. The completed work has an average annual economic benefit of $638,000 in a rural and low-income part of the State.

Ohio: Muskingum River Watershed. The Muskingum Watershed project, located in Ashland and Wayne counties (Congressional District 16), involves area along the Jerome and Muddy Forks of the Mohican River. The project removed logjams and obstructions from 35 miles of stream that had accumulated over years of storm and flood events and severely restricted natural stream flow. Completed in December 2009, the project directly benefits 109 private properties, a county park district, a state preserve, a public water supply well field, numerous gas lines, and 16 bridges by lowering the water level in the streams to normal levels, preventing bank erosion caused by the obstructions, and removing debris on or near bridge abutments. Sponsors of this project were the Joint Boards of County Commissioners for Ashland and Wayne Counties, with assistance from the Joint Boards and staff of the Ashland and Wayne Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD). The Joint Board of Commissioners is providing ongoing monitoring and maintenance of the completed project.

West Virginia: Dunloup Creek Watershed. Dunloup Creek in Fayette and Raleigh counties of West Virginia (Congressional District 3) has experienced several major flood events in recent history, including consecutive floods in May and July 2004, that devastated the communities. The area is within the 100-year floodplain, and repeated flooding has severely damaged vulnerable properties, reducing the quality of life, and impacting minorities and disadvantaged residents along Dunloup Creek.

During the project planning process, measures such as dams, channels, floodwalls, dikes, and dredging were considered, but determined to be ineffective. Instead a voluntary buyout was determined to be the most cost-effective and feasible solution to the ongoing flooding problem. Residents of Glen Jean, Harvey, Kilsyth, Mt. Hope and Red Star in Fayette County who live along Dunloup Creek can now voluntarily relocate from homes that repeatedly flood to safe housing out of the floodplain. Community support for the program is high; at the end of FY 2010, there were 255 applications for buyouts, which exceeded the original estimate of 80 percent participation. The project will also pay for removal of the homes, thereby reducing sewage concerns, as well as restoration of the land along the stream to natural conditions. The project will also contribute to improved water quality in the New River, a National Recreation Area and whitewater rafting destination. The estimated average annual benefits of this nearly $14 million project are $1,029,000. The benefit to cost ratio is 1.5:1.0 for this project. Local sponsors include the Fayette County Commission, the City of Mount Hope, the West Virginia Conservation Committee, and the Southern Conservation District. The Dunloup Creek Watershed Association is highly involved and provides an important communication link between the residents and project sponsors.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
EMERGENCY WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM

STATUS OF PROGRAM

Current Activities

Background. Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program is authorized by Section 216, P.L. 81-516, (33 U.S.C. 701b-1) and Sections 403-405, P.L. 95-334 (16 U.S.C. 2203-2205). The Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 amended Section 403 of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-334) (16 U.S.C. 2203) to include the purchase of floodplain easements as an emergency measure authorized under EWP.

Program Objectives. The Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program was established to respond to emergencies created by natural disasters. EWP projects reduce threats to life and property caused by floods, fires, windstorms, and other natural occurrences. At the same time, they must be economically, environmentally, and socially defensible and technically sound. EWP projects include removing debris from stream channels, road culverts, and bridges; reshaping and protecting eroded banks; correcting damaged drainage facilities; repairing levees and structures; reseeding damaged areas; and purchasing floodplain easements.

Program Operations.

EWP Recovery Program Administration. EWP projects must be sponsored by a legal subdivision of the State, including any city, county, general improvement district, conservation district, or Native American Tribe or Tribal organization as defined in Section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. Public and private landowners are eligible for assistance but must be represented by a project sponsor. Sponsors are responsible for securing land rights to do repair work, the necessary permits, and the local share of the funding, as well as for getting the work installed. NRCS may provide up to 75 percent of the construction cost of emergency measures (90 percent within limited resource areas as identified by United States Department of Commerce Census data). The remaining 25 percent (10 percent within limited resource areas) must come from local sources as cash or in-kind services. Work can be done through either Federal or local contracts. EWP work is not limited to a particular set of prescribed measures but is determined by NRCS on a case-by-case basis. EWP funding depends upon supplemental appropriations from Congress.

EWP Floodplain Easements. NRCS requires that EWP floodplain easement transactions on land with residences or other structures have a local sponsor and the sponsor acquire fee title to the land encumbered by the easement. NRCS may purchase EWP easements on any floodplain lands that have been impaired within the last 12 months or that have a history of repeated flooding (i.e., flooded at least twice during the past ten years). Under the floodplain easement option, a landowner voluntarily offers to sell a permanent conservation easement that provides NRCS with the full authority to restore and enhance the floodplain.

NRCS may pay up to 100 percent of the restoration costs of the easement. Restoration efforts include both structural and non-structural practices. To the extent practicable, NRCS actively restores the natural features and characteristics of the floodplain by re-creating the topographic diversity and re-establishing native vegetation.

The landowner has the opportunity to participate in the restoration efforts. Landowners retain several rights to the property, including quiet enjoyment, the right to control public access, and the right to undeveloped recreational use such as hunting and fishing. At any time, a landowner may obtain authorization from NRCS to engage in other activities provided the agency determines the activities will further the protection and enhancement of the floodplain easements.

FY 2010 Activities.

In FY 2010, EWP provided $59,986,619 in funding for 334 projects in 82 disaster events, as the data below show. The economic benefit from those projects is estimated to be $202,890,600, providing a benefit to cost ratio of 3.3:1.0.

General	
Number of disaster events funded	82
Number of disaster events unfunded	26
Number of projects completed	334

Costs	
Technical assistance	$2,331,935
Financial assistance	53,717,769
Local contribution	3,936,915
Total costs	59,986,619

Benefits	
Public buildings protected (no.)	182
Private buildings protected (no.)	1,848
Roads protected (miles)	67.7
Utilities protected (no.)	165
Value of property protected	$193,288,129
Debris removed (feet)	167,492
Streambank stabilized (feet)	78,281
Land protected (acres)	13,174
Number of contracts 8(A)	1
Value of contracts 8(A)	$87,000
Total economic benefit	202,890,600

Benefit/Cost Ratio	3.3:1.0

Number of persons benefited	
Minority	80,432
Other	202,623
Total	283,055

Also, in FY 2010 much progress was made in acquiring the properties enrolled in FY 2009 in the four Midwestern States affected by flooding in summer 2008. The table below displays those accomplishments by State.

Easements Acquired

State	Number	(Acres)
Iowa	10	1,016
Indiana	16	1,582
Missouri	4	1,555
Wisconsin	2	149

Note: These States received funding for floodplain easement acquisition in FY 2009.

In FY 2010, NRCS made $2,640,000 available for floodplain easement purchases in West Virginia and $3,500,000 available for floodplain easement purchases in Kentucky. Both these projects will purchase easements on lands with residences or other nonagricultural structures.

Getting Conservation on the Ground.

Kentucky: Emergency response to storm damage. A "State of Emergency" was declared by the Kentucky Governor after a torrential storm moved through Pike County on Saturday, July 17, 2010. According to National Weather Service reports, between four and seven inches of rainfall fell in several sections of the county over an eight hour period. The storm left two persons dead, approximately 200 homes damaged or destroyed, and countless sections of county roads damaged, threatened or destroyed. NRCS field personnel contacted the State office to inform them of the recent disaster and crisis situation. Disaster Assessment and Recovery Teams were immediately mobilized to

complete Damage Survey Reports (DSR's) related to the event. In addition, numerous vehicles were washed into the stream channel causing significant blockages and severe stream bank erosion had occurred.

Within 72 hours NRCS completed a DSR and engineering design, and a project agreement totaling $725,000 was entered into between NRCS and the Pike County Fiscal Court to repair damage to Harless Creek. The work to be completed included the removal of sediment and debris from the stream channel and stabilization of failing stream banks that were threatening the county road and other critical infrastructure. By the end of September 2010, all work detailed in the agreement had been completed. Many residents of the community had rebuilt their homes and completed repair efforts. Roadways were safe to travel, and future flooding threats from the debris blocked stream channel were alleviated.

In addition to Harless Creek, NRCS entered into 21 Project Agreements with the Pike County Fiscal Court totaling over $4,159,000. Agreements were also entered into between the City of Pikeville and the Kentucky Department of Transportation totaling $9,000 and $22,101, respectively. Of these projects eight are currently complete with approximately $1,755,251 expended. The remaining 15 agreements have been contracted and are expected to be completed by the end of 2010.

Missouri: Locust Creek Watershed. In 2009, the owner of land on either side of Pershing State Park offered two tracts of land—a 1,118.5-acre tract and a 310-acre tract—into the floodplain easement portion of the EWP Program. The tracts were actively farmed but had flooded several times during the spring and fall from the adjacent creek, tributaries, and ditches. After the easement closed and was recorded, the landowner sold fee title to the two tracts to Pershing State Park, increasing the park's total park acreage by 38 percent to 5,225 acres.

The Locust Creek Watershed has been heavily modified since the 1920s, causing siltation within the creek and flooding on the Higgins Ditch side. Flooding in Higgins Ditch has caused tremendous pressures along older levee systems that were not designed to carry frequent and significant flood flows. Today, there is an eight foot difference in the Locust Creek and the Higgins Ditch streambeds.

Missouri EWP Program floodplain easement restorations frequently lower existing levees in strategic locations to direct flood flows across the easement. The temporary storage of floodwaters in additional acres helps to lower flood crests and makes floods less severe. The floodplain expansion in the planned restoration will allow out-of-bank floodwater to more efficiently flow down the Locust Creek watershed system. The project will expand the width of the floodplain of the Locust Creek valley by 100 percent for just over 1.5 miles along the creek.

Located within the Pershing Park boundaries and in close proximity to the easement is one of the last stronghold populations of the Eastern Massassauga rattlesnake. The rattlesnake is a federally listed candidate for endangered species and is listed as an endangered species by Missouri. It is often found in association with wet prairies and wetlands in northern parts of the State. NRCS is working closely with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (Parks), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Missouri Department of Conservation to identify habitat components that would help expand the snakes' population. The two EWP floodplain easements surrounding the park are anticipated to provide habitat and will assist with the recovery of this species.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
Watershed Rehabilitation Program

Annualized 2011 Continuing Resolution	$40,161,000
Budget Estimate, 2012	--
Decrease in Appropriations	-40,161,000

Summary of Increases and Decreases
(On basis of appropriation)

Item of Change	2011 Estimated	Pay Costs	Program Changes	2012 Estimated
Watershed Rehabilitation:				
1. Technical Assistance	$11,766,000	--	-$11,766,000	--
2. Financial Assistance	28,395,000	--	28,395,000	--
Total Available	40,161,000	--	40,161,000(1)	--

Project Statement
(On basis of appropriation)

Program	2010 Actual Amount	2010 Actual Staff Years	2011 Estimated Amount	2011 Estimated Staff Years	Increase or Decrease	2012 Estimated Amount	2012 Estimated Staff Years
Watershed Rehabilitation:							
Technical Assistance.....	$17,200,000	82	$11,766,000	71	-$11,766,000	--	--
Financial Assistance.....	22,961,000	--	28,395,000	--	-28,395,000	--	--
Total, Appropriation.	40,161,000	82	40,161,000	71	-40,161,000	--	--

Project Statement
(On basis of available funds)

Program	2010 Actual Amount	2010 Actual Staff Years	2011 Estimated Amount	2011 Estimated Staff Years	Increase or Decrease	2012 Estimated Amount	2012 Estimated Staff Years
Watershed Rehabilitation:							
Technical Assistance.....	$19,176,554	82	$17,020,388	71	-$17,020,388	--	--
Financial Assistance.....	28,942,590	--	33,493,023	--	-33,493,023	--	--
Total Direct Obligations ...	48,119,144	82	50,513,411	71	-50,513,411	--	--
Unobligated balance brought forward	(-9,946,369)	--	(-11,431,425)	--	(+10,352,411)	(-1,079,013)	--
Prior Year Recoveries.....	(-8,277,327)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Offsetting Collections	(-959,498)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Reimbursements.....	(+872,639)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Change in customer Payments	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Not Available Carried Fwd	(-1,079,014)	--	(+1,079,013)	--	--	(+1,079,013)	--
Unobligated balance carried forward	(+11,431,425)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Adjusted Appropriation	(40,161,000)	--	(40,161,000)	--	(-40,161,000)	--	--
Reimbursable Oblig.	872,639	--	300,000	--	--	--	--
Obligational Authority.....	48,991,783	82	50,813,411	71	-50,513,411	--	--

Justification of Increases and Decreases

(1) A decrease of $40,161,000 for Watershed Rehabilitation ($40,161,000 available in 2011):

(a) A decrease of $40,161,000 and 71 staff years for the Watershed Rehabilitation Program activities.

Under the authorities of Section 14 of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, assistance is provided to communities to address concerns about aging dams which are owned and operated locally. Many difficult choices have been made in the fiscal year 2012 budget proposal in order to ensure fiscal responsibility within the current economic climate. This budget proposes the elimination of funding for the Watershed Rehabilitation Program.

Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years
2010 Actual and Estimated 2011 and 2012

	2010		2011		2012	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years
Alabama	$6,453	--	--	--	--	--
Arizona	17,071,548	5	$17,576,262	3	--	--
Arkansas	59,908	1	--	--	--	--
Colorado	348,225	3	340,000	2	--	--
Connecticut	19,994	--	--	--	--	--
Georgia	344,630	3	615,000	4	--	--
Iowa	5,000	--	--	--	--	--
Kansas	140,000	--	2,227,100	--	--	--
Kentucky	287,812	--	350,000	--	--	--
Massachusetts	537,034	1	766,000	1	--	--
Mississippi	2,027,350	5	1,300,000	1	--	--
Missouri	137,539	1	100,000	1	--	--
Nebraska	784,696	2	2,175,000	3	--	--
Nevada	83,600	--	--	--	--	--
New Jersey	89,643	1	210,000	2	--	--
New Mexico	618,978	2	167,530	1	--	--
New York	55,502	--	565,000	--	--	--
North Carolina	350,789	--	--	--	--	--
North Dakota	2,146,955	5	842,000	6	--	--
Ohio	344,916	2	394,000	2	--	--
Oklahoma	12,329,989	20	6,155,000	18	--	--
Oregon	40,000	--	--	--	--	--
Pennsylvania	571,071	2	450,000	2	--	--
South Carolina	8,347	--	--	--	--	--
Tennessee	203,946	1	450,000	2	--	--
Texas	1,120,581	8	3,695,000	6	--	--
Utah	654,282	1	1,050,000	2	--	--
Virginia	1,325,896	5	610,000	4	--	--
West Virginia	2,078,478	3	675,000	1	--	--
Wisconsin	256,720	1	10,000	--	--	--
Wyoming	119,252	1	348,660	2	--	--
National Hdqtr	3,558,000	8	3,927,778	8	--	--
National Centers	392,010	1	312,874	--	--	--
Nat. Tech. Sup. Cen	--	--	28,366	--	--	--
Undistributed	--	--	5,172,841	--	--	--
Total Obligations/Est	48,119,144	82	50,513,411	71	--	--

Classification by Objects
2010 Actual and Estimated 2011 and 2012

Personnel Compensation:		2010	2011	2012
Washington, D.C.		$1,427,712	$1,252,859	--
Field		5,017,655	4,403,141	--
11	Total personnel compensation	6,445,367	5,656,000	--
12	Personnel benefits	1,611,238	1,414,000	--
13	Benefits for former personnel	4,230	4,000	--
	Total pers. comp. & benefits	8,060,835	7,074,000	--
Other Objects:				
21	Travel	365,175	324,000	--
22	Transportation of things	33,526	30,000	--
23.1	Rent payments to GSA	--	--	--
23.2	Rental payments to others	398,447	353,000	--
23.3	Communications, utilities, and misc. charges	327,705	291,000	--
24	Printing and reproduction	27,599	25,000	--
25.1	Advisory and assistance services	18,130,088	20,980,000	--
25.2	Other Services	5,032,637	4,512,039	--
25.2	Construction Contracts	3,967,270	3,557,372	--
26	Supplies and materials	380,223	337,000	--
31	Equipment	574,538	510,000	--
32	Land and structures	--	--	--
41	Grants	10,812,503	12,513,000	--
42	Insurance and loans	5,451	4,000	--
43	Interest and dividends	3,147	3,000	--
44	Refunds	--	--	--
	Total other objects	40,058,309	43,439,411	--
Total, direct obligations		48,119,144	50,513,411	--

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
Watershed Rehabilitation Program

SUMMARY OF RECOVERY ACT FUNDING

Item of Change	2010	2011	2012
Watershed Rehabilitation Program	--	--	--

Project Statement – Recovery Act
(On basis of available funds)

Program	2010 Actual Amount	2010 Actual Staff Years	2011 Estimated Amount	2011 Estimated Staff Years	Increase or Decrease	2012 Estimated Amount	2012 Estimated Staff Years
Watershed Rehabilitation:							
Technical Assistance.....	$9,102,554	27	--	--	--	--	--
Financial Assistance.....	23,774,592	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total Direct Obligations ...	32,877,146	27			--	--	--
Unobligated Balance Brought Forward.....	(-32,158,801)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Unobligated Bal. Perm. Reduced……..	(+100,669)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Prior Year Recoveries	(-819,014)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Adjusted Appropriation	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Reimbursable Oblig.	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Obligational Authority.....	32,877,146	27	--	--	--	--	--

Program Implementation Activities:
Goals and Coordination Efforts: The authority for rehabilitation of aging watershed dams is included in section 14 of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954 (PL 83-566). Any of the over 11,000 dams in 47 States that were constructed under the four watershed programs (PL-534, PL-566, Pilot, or RC&D) are eligible for assistance under this authority. Many of these dams are nearing the end of their 50-year design life and are in need of rehabilitation to address critical public health and safety issues. The goals of the Watershed Rehabilitation Program are to assist the sponsors (dam owners and operators) to ensure the safety of dams constructed under the authority of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (PL 83-566), or any of the other three watershed programs (PL-534, Pilot, or RC&D). All projects are carried out with the assistance of the sponsors, which may be any State agency, county or groups of counties, municipality, town or township, soil and water conservation district, flood prevention or flood control district, Indian Tribe or Tribal organization, or any other nonprofit agency with authority under State law to carry out, maintain, and operate watershed works of improvement. NRCS may provide technical assistance and up to 65 percent of the total rehabilitation project cost.

Program Objectives: American Recovery Reinvestment Act Watershed Rehabilitation funds addressed hazardous conditions that the State agency with dam safety responsibility has identified as a priority and that are owned or operated by sponsors that are ready and able to begin rehabilitation. Consideration was also given to projects that will protect the greatest number of people.

Delivery Schedule: Funding was allocated in March 2009, to selected projects. Milestones for implementation include the date 1) the rehabilitation plan will be authorized for each project; 2) the design will be completed; 3) the financial assistance will be obligated; and 4) the rehabilitation is completed.

Performance Measures:

	Performance Target		
	2010 Actual	2011 Target	2012 Target
Watershed Rehabilitation			
Number of jobs created or saved	605	583	--
Unsafe dams rehabilitated or removed, number	2	16	--

Note: Jobs created or saved were developed by using IMPLAN, designed by the USDA Forest Service, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and USDOI-Bureau of Land Management.

Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years
2010 Actual and Estimated 2011 and 2012

	2010		2011		2012	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years
Arkansas	$1,407,537	3	--	--	--	--
Georgia	5,815,000	2	--	--	--	--
Kansas	215,608	--	--	--	--	--
Massachusetts	1,500,298	1	--	--	--	--
Missouri	301,254	1	--	--	--	--
Nebraska	273,886	2	--	--	--	--
New York	80,920	1	--	--	--	--
Oklahoma	4,010,613	8	--	--	--	--
Texas	2,430,186	2	--	--	--	--
Virginia	3,646,827	2	--	--	--	--
West Virginia	12,204,017	1	--	--	--	--
National Hdqtr	205,000	--	--	--	--	--
National Centers	786,000	4	--	--	--	--
Total Obligations/Est.	32,877,146	27	--	--	--	--

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
WATERSHED REHABILITATION PROGRAM

STATUS OF PROGRAM

Current Activities

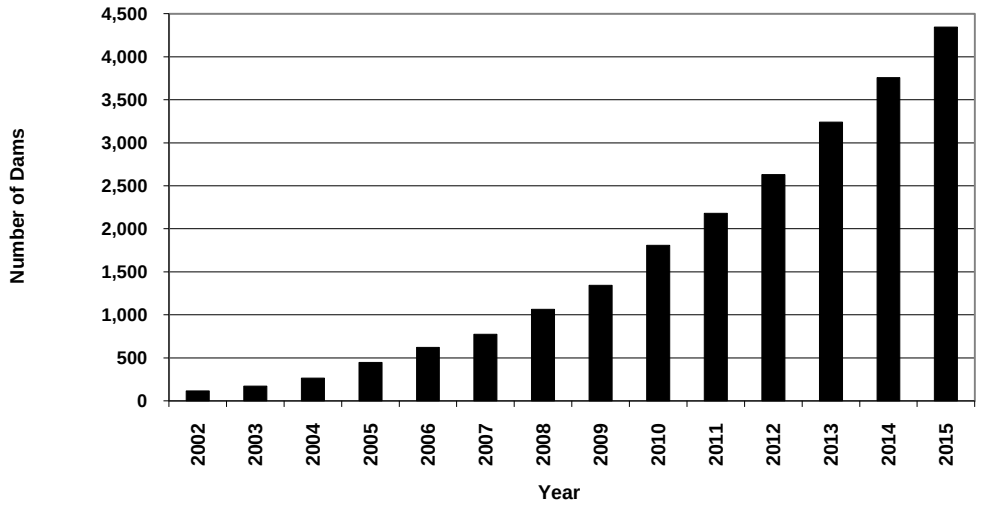
Background. In November 2000, the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (P.L. 83-566) was amended by The Watershed Rehabilitation Amendments of 2000 (Section 313 of P.L. 106-472), which authorized NRCS to assist communities to address public health and safety concerns and environmental impacts of aging dams. NRCS may provide technical and financial assistance for the planning, design, and implementation of rehabilitation projects that may include upgrading or removing the dams.

Program Objectives. The purpose of the Watershed Rehabilitation Program is to extend the service life of dams and bring them into compliance with applicable safety and performance standards or to decommission the dams so they no longer pose a threat to life and property**.**

Since 1948, local communities have constructed more than 11,300 watershed dams with assistance from NRCS. Local sponsors provided leadership in the program and secured land rights and easements needed for construction. The Natural Resources Conservation Service provided technical assistance and cost-sharing for the construction. Local sponsors assumed responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the structures once they were completed. These dams protect America's communities and natural resources with flood control but many also provide the primary source of drinking water in the area or offer recreation and wildlife benefits.

Some communities that have been protected by these watershed dams are now vulnerable to devastation caused by flooding because the dams have reached or will soon reach the end of their 50-year design life. In 2010, 1,808 watershed dams had reached the end of their designed life-span. By 2015, this number will exceed 4,300, as the table below shows. Time has taken its toll on many dams: spillway pipes have deteriorated and reservoirs have filled with sediment. More significantly, subdivisions and businesses have been built in areas that were once agricultural land the dams protected from flooding. A dam failure would pose a serious threat to the health and safety of those living downstream and to the communities that depend on the reservoir for drinking water, and would have serious adverse environmental impacts on the ecosystem.

Cumulative Number of Watershed Dams by Year from 2002 thru 2015 that Reach the End of Their Design Life



Program Operations. The Watershed Rehabilitation Program's highest priority is to rehabilitate dams that pose the greatest risk to public safety, that is, the dams classified as high hazard in the national dam safety classification

system. Dams classified in the three-tier system as low or significant hazard to public safety will not be planned for rehabilitation until all high-hazard dam project requests from public sponsors have been rehabilitated. NRCS has a current portfolio of over 650 high hazard dams where local communities have requested Watershed Rehabilitation Program assistance to evaluate the condition and safety of their dams.

Dams installed through the following programs administered by NRCS are eligible for rehabilitation assistance: the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (the Watershed Operations Program, specifically P. L. 83-566), Pilot Watershed Projects authorized by the Agriculture Appropriation Act of 1953, and the Resource Conservation and Development Program.

NRCS may provide up to 65 percent of the total cost of dam rehabilitation projects, defined as including acquisition of land, easements, rights-of-way, project administration, non-Federal technical assistance, and construction. NRCS provides technical assistance to conduct technical studies; develop rehabilitation plans; develop environmental impact statements or environmental assessments; prepare the engineering designs; and provide construction management services including construction inspection. Local sponsors are required to provide 35 percent of the total project cost.

The implementation strategy for the Watershed Rehabilitation Program has three phases, all of which require requests from a local public sponsor: 1) Conduct dam assessments to evaluate the condition of dams including safety hazards, and to provide preliminary alternatives for rehabilitation; 2) prepare project plans for implementation; and 3) implement dam rehabilitation.

Partnerships among local communities, State governments, and NRCS leverage services and funds and allow many projects to move quickly through the planning and implementation stages.

- Technical capacity. NRCS does not have technical staff capacity to respond to all requests for watershed rehabilitation assistance from project sponsors. During FY 2010, NRCS established its first ever national contract with environmental consulting companies to perform dam assessments, rehabilitation planning, engineering designs, and construction inspection services under NRCS guidance. Also, some sponsors have used either their own professional staff or acquired technical services as part of their "in-kind" contribution to meet their 35 percent cost-share requirement.
- Financial assistance. Sponsors have used many innovative means to obtain the funds necessary to address the rehabilitation of the aging dams that were threatening their local communities. They have used the sale of bonds dedicated to dam safety and rehabilitation, levied taxes on beneficiaries, obtained grants, used State appropriations, sought voluntary land rights from private landowners, and provided in-kind services using existing staff.

NRCS prioritizes all applications for annual funding for rehabilitation planning and construction. Priorities are based on a numerical factor associated with the overall condition of a dam and the population at risk should a dam fail.

FY 2010 Activities.

In FY 2010, project sponsors submitted requests for Federal assistance totaling $37.5 million for the rehabilitation of 90 high priority dams in 24 States. The dams funded in FY 2010 contributed to the number of dams listed in the table below. Additionally, NRCS conducted 650 ongoing assessments of high hazard dams to provide communities with technical information about the condition of their dams and alternatives to rehabilitation for dams that do not meet Federal dam safety standards.

Summary of Watershed Rehabilitation Projects and Allocations as of September 30, 2010

State	**Total Number Of Funded Dam Rehabilitations Projects FY 2000 – FY 2010**	**Number of Dams Rehabilitated**	**FY 2010 Federal Allocations[a]**
Alabama	1	1	$6,799
Arizona	11	0	17,073,000
Arkansas	6	0	60,000
California	1	0	0
Colorado	3	0	346,000
Connecticut	0	0	20,000
Georgia	12	3	375,000
Iowa	4	4	5,000
Kansas	3	0	140,000
Kentucky	4	1	333,970
Massachusetts	6	0	1,245,900
Mississippi	23	15	2,312,400
Missouri	5	2	439,079
Montana	2	0	0
Nebraska	11	6	785,000
Nevada	0	0	83,600
New Hampshire	2	0	0
New Jersey	1	0	106,000
New Mexico	8	3	619,116
North Carolina	0	0	352,000
North Dakota	3	0	2,148,537
New York	6	0	55,538
Ohio	9	8	347,941
Oregon	0	0	40,000
Oklahoma	46	22	13,136,500
Pennsylvania	4	0	827,980
South Carolina	0	0	10,705
Tennessee	3	2	205,000
Texas	22	10	1,944,485
Utah	3	0	664,386
Virginia	10	7	1,335,833
West Virginia	4	0	2,451,936
Wisconsin	13	11	394,081
Wyoming	2	0	149,253
NHQ	0	0	4,624,303
Total	228	95	52,639,342

[a]Allocations include project planning and implementation. Carryover funds and prior year recoveries are included in the allocation.

Activities in FY 2010 included two major initiatives to improve program delivery to the public. NRCS conducted an evaluation to determine whether the program is equitably delivered in economically disadvantaged areas. The evaluation affirmed NRCS's outreach efforts are resulting in the equitable delivery of dam assessments and dam rehabilitations in economically disadvantaged areas. Also, during the year, NRCS entered into a national Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to coordinate dam safety activities with the National Association of State Dam Safety Officials, and MOUs were established with State dam safety agencies in 27 States. The MOUs formalize the Federal and State partnership to coordinate efforts in dam safety.

Project Status and Benefits. By September 30, 2010, the rehabilitation of 162 dams was authorized in 22 States, and the rehabilitation of 95 dams was completed. The remaining 67 authorized rehabilitation projects are being implemented subject to funding priorities. The following table summarizes the benefits provided by the 95 completed projects:

Average annual floodwater damage reduction benefits ($):	$5,782,396
Average annual non-floodwater damage reduction benefits ($):	$4,775,783
Number of people with reduced risk downstream from the dams :	5,106
Number of people who benefit from project action:	220,044
Number of homes and businesses benefiting from project action:	6,445
Number of farms and ranches benefiting from project action:	574
Number of bridges benefiting from project action:	226

Getting Conservation on the Ground.

Virginia: South River Watershed, Site 25, Augusta County. When an Augusta County dam that has long served as a bulwark against devastating floodwaters in the South River Watershed was classified as high hazard because of development downstream, local sponsors approached NRCS for rehabilitation assistance. Site 25, known locally as the Toms Branch site, is the third dam to be rehabilitated in the watershed. The Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District, City of Waynesboro, Augusta County, and the Commonwealth of Virginia all contributed funds towards the local share of the $1.6 million construction project. The Federal share was $1.2 million in Watershed Rehabilitation Program funds.

Despite construction challenges, and a record 27-inch snowfall caused an early winter shut down, the sponsors and NRCS completed construction in FY 2010. The construction included widening the auxiliary spillway by 150 feet and raising the dam height by two feet. The rehabilitated dam will protect the community for another 50 years. It reduces potential threats to life and property for 435 residents, 209 homes, several businesses and public buildings. It also protects six public roads and nine bridges used for medical and emergency services, one railroad, and a number of water, gas, and communication lines. Additionally, it improves water quality for communities downstream and enhances fish habitat.

Mississippi: Chiwapa Creek Watershed, Site 3, Pontotoc County. In 2000, the Chiwapa Drainage District and the City of Pontotoc requested assistance from NRCS to rehabilitate their dam that forms Pontotoc Lake. The City of Pontotoc has developed the area around the water's edge for recreation. It includes picnic tables, a swimming area, walking paths, and pavilion structures. Originally, the dam was constructed for $60,000 in 1971. The sponsors were concerned not only about the safety risks of the aging dam, but also about preserving the water sports and other recreational uses the reservoir provides. The then newly authorized Watershed Rehabilitation Program provided a timely solution to address these needs.

The sponsors and NRCS worked jointly over several years to assess the need, develop the project plan, arrange for Federal and local funding, and rehabilitate the dam. The dam was rehabilitated for a cost of $888,000. The Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission provided funds to supplement the non-Federal share of the project costs. The dam rehabilitation was completed in 2010. The dam will protect families, commerce, and transportation routes in particular three bridges in addition to continuing the use of the area for outdoor recreation.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
Resource Conservation and Development

Annualized 2011 Continuing Resolution	$50,730,000
Budget Estimate, 2012	--
Decrease in Appropriations	-50,730,000

Summary of Increases and Decreases
(On basis of appropriation)

Item of Change	2011 Estimated	Pay Costs	Other Changes	2012 Estimated
Resource Conservation and Development:				
1. Technical Assistance	$50,730,000	--	-$50,730,000	--
Total Available	50,730,000	--	-50,730,000	--

Project Statement
(On basis of appropriation)

Program	2010 Actual Amount	2010 Actual Staff Years	2011 Estimated Amount	2011 Estimated Staff Years	Increase or Decrease	2012 Estimated Amount	2012 Estimated Staff Years
Resource Conservation and Development:							
1. Technical Assistance	$50,730,000	403	$50,730,000	423	$50,730,000	--	--
Total Appropriation	50,730,000	403	50,730,000	423	50,730,000(1)	--	--

Project Statement
(On basis of available funds)

Program	2010 Actual Amount	2010 Actual Staff Years	2011 Estimated Amount	2011 Estimated Staff Years	Increase or Decrease	2012 Estimated Amount	2012 Estimated Staff Years
Resource Conservation and Development:							
Technical Assistance	$50,762,797	403	$53,572,680	423	-$53,572,680	--	--
Total, Direct Obligations	50,762,797	403	53,572,680	423	-53,572,680	--	--
Unobligated balance brought forward	(-3,028,713)	--	(-2,873,750)	--	(+2,842,680)	(-31,070)	--
Prior Year Recoveries	(-183,604)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Unobligated Expiring Bal.	(+253,918)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Offsetting Collections	(-1,363)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Reimbursements	(+76,148)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Chg in Customer Payments	(-77,303)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Not Available Carried Fwd.	(+54,370)	--	(+31,070)	--	--	(+31,070)	--
Unobligated balance carried forward	(+2,873,750)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Adjusted Appropriation	(50,730,000)	--	(50,730,000)	--	(-50,730,000)	--	--
Reimbursable Obligations:							
(a) Technical Assist	76,148	--	--	--	--	--	--
Reimbursable Oblig	76,148	--	--	--	--	--	--
Obligational Authority	50,838,945	403	53,572,680	423	-53,572,680	--	--

Justification of Increases and Decreases

(1) A decrease of $50,730,000 for Resource Conservation and Development ($50,730,000 available in 2011):

(a) A decrease of $50,730,000 and 423 staff years for the Resource Conservation and Development program activities.

Due to budget priorities, the fiscal year 2012 budget proposes to terminate funding for this program.

Main Workload Factors

	2010 Actual	2011 Estimate	2012 Estimate
Status of Designated RC&D Areas:			
Areas funded at start of year	375	375	--
New areas funded in year	--	--	--
Total Areas funded end of year	375	375	--
Applications on hand	(39)	(39)	--

		2010 Actual	2011 Estimate	2012 Estimate
RC&D Project Activity:				
Project Plans:				
Approved	During year	4,821	2,000	--
	Cumulative	100,352	102,352	102,532
Ongoing	During year	7,472	4,000	--
Completed	During year	4,738	4,000	--
	Cumulative	88,081	92,081	92,081

Input of Resources to Projects ($ in 1,000's):
(Resources provided for accomplishing projects. Includes direct technical and financial assistance and value of donated materials attributable to a project.)

-- RC&D resources	During year	--	--	--
-- Other Federal	During year	$84,900	$50,000	--
-- State government	During year	78,127	40,000	--
-- Local government	During year	31,928	20,000	--
-- Non-government	During year	104,918	60,000	--

Rural Development Loans:

	2010 Actual		2011 Estimated		2012 Estimated	
Item	No.	Amount	No.	Amount	No.	Amount
1. Loans obligated during year	--	--	--	--	--	--
2. Borrowers outstanding	1	9,819	--	--	--	--
3. Loans cumulative	292	29,484,709	292	29,484,709	292	29,484,709

Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years
2010 Actual and Estimated 2011 and 2012

	2010		2011		2012	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years
Alabama	$1,116,305	9	$1,178,096	9	--	--
Alaska	1,168,537	8	1,233,220	8	--	--
Arizona	766,754	7	809,197	7	--	--
Arkansas	918,825	7	969,686	7	--	--
California	1,623,198	12	1,713,048	14	--	--
Colorado	958,982	8	1,012,066	8	--	--
Connecticut	283,508	2	299,201	2	--	--
Delaware	143,149	1	151,074	1	--	--
Florida	909,150	6	959,474	6	--	--
Georgia	1,384,419	10	1,461,051	10	--	--
Hawaii	932,386	9	983,998	9	--	--
Idaho	993,977	8	1,048,998	8	--	--
Illinois	1,262,614	11	1,332,504	13	--	--
Indiana	1,139,037	11	1,202,087	12	--	--
Iowa	1,927,599	16	2,034,298	18	--	--
Kansas	1,133,594	8	1,196,342	8	--	--
Kentucky	1,762,455	15	1,860,014	17	--	--
Louisiana	919,409	7	970,301	7	--	--
Maine	651,632	6	687,702	6	--	--
Maryland	384,671	4	405,964	4	--	--
Massachusetts	449,079	3	473,937	3	--	--
Michigan	885,507	7	934,522	7	--	--
Minnesota	1,000,538	11	1,055,921	12	--	--
Mississippi	869,496	9	917,625	9	--	--
Missouri	999,762	8	1,055,102	8	--	--
Montana	949,752	8	1,002,324	8	--	--
Nebraska	1,439,249	11	1,518,917	13	--	--
Nevada	409,927	3	432,618	3	--	--
New Hampshire	296,079	2	312,469	2	--	--
New Jersey	285,503	3	301,306	3	--	--
New Mexico	983,784	8	1,038,240	8	--	--
New York	1,058,210	11	1,116,785	13	--	--
North Carolina	1,236,032	11	1,304,451	12	--	--
North Dakota	954,044	8	1,006,854	8	--	--
Ohio	1,160,251	10	1,224,474	10	--	--
Oklahoma	1,134,810	8	1,197,626	8	--	--
Oregon	630,403	5	665,298	5	--	--
Pennsylvania	1,108,672	10	1,170,041	11	--	--
Puerto Rico	425,297	4	448,840	4	--	--
Rhode Island	125,020	1	131,941	1	--	--
South Carolina	824,556	8	870,198	8	--	--
South Dakota	799,785	7	844,056	7	--	--
Tennessee	1,284,641	11	1,355,750	12	--	--

	2010		2011		2012	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years
Texas	2,776,559	22	3,194,017	24	--	--
Utah	834,407	7	880,594	7	--	--
Vermont	279,840	2	295,331	2	--	--
Virginia	877,932	9	926,510	9	--	--
Washington	806,657	7	851,308	7	--	--
West Virginia	718,137	7	757,888	7	--	--
Wisconsin	887,784	7	936,925	7	--	--
Wyoming	606,411	5	639,977	5	--	--
National Hdqtr	3,159,856	5	3,073,000	6	--	--
National Centers	123,339	--	130,166	--	--	--
Nat. Tech. Sup. Cents	1,277	--	1,348	--	--	--
Undistributed	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total, Available/Est	50,762,797	403	53,572,680	423	--	--

Classification by Objects
2010 Actual and Estimated 2011 and 2012

Personnel Compensation:		2010	2011	2012
Washington, D.C.		$1,236,421	$1,334,920	--
Field		30,406,026	32,038,080	--
11	Total personnel compensation	31,642,447	33,373,000	--
12	Personnel benefits	8,707,661	9,184,000	--
13	Benefits for former personnel	6,516	7,000	--
	Total pers. comp. & benefits	40,356,624	42,564,000	--
Other Objects:				
21	Travel	943,730	1,003,000	--
22	Transportation of things	113,558	121,000	--
23.2	Rental payments to others	1,521,436	1,616,000	--
23.3	Communications, utilities, and miscellaneous charges	981,441	1,043,000	--
24	Printing and reproduction	32,814	35,000	--
25.1	Advisory and assistance services	-68	--	--
25.2	Other services	5,153,460	5,427,680	--
26	Supplies and materials	891,499	947,000	--
31	Equipment	762,489	810,000	--
42	Insurance and loans	5,721	6,000	--
43	Interest and dividends	92	--	--
	Total other objects	10,406,172	11,008,680	
Total, direct obligations		50,762,797	53,572,680	--

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

STATUS OF PROGRAM

Current Activities

Background. The Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program was initiated under the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, (16 U.S.C. 590a-590f), the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act, (16 U.S.C. 1010 and 1011), and the Food and Agriculture Act of 1962, and is authorized under subtitle H, title XV of the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981, (16 U.S.C. 3451-3461), as amended. The Food Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (2002 Act) permanently authorized the program. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the program. The 2008 Act further strengthened the relationship between the Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the RC&D areas.

Program Objectives. The RC&D Program encourages and improves the capability of State and local units of government and non-profit organizations in rural areas to plan, develop, and implement programs for resource conservation and development. NRCS provides program administration and assistance to RC&D areas through volunteer non-profit RC&D Councils. Other USDA agencies provide technical and limited financial assistance to RC&D Councils, which also obtain assistance from other State, local, and Federal agencies, private organizations, and foundations to carry out specific projects.

The RC&D program blends natural resource use and conservation with local economic and community development. Program objectives address improving the quality of life, including social, economic and environmental concerns; continuing wise use of natural resources; and strengthening the local citizens' ability to use the assistance available through USDA and other Federal agency partnerships.

The Secretary has designated 375 RC&D areas that serve 2,696 counties in every State, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Basin and serve over 85 percent of U.S. counties and more than 77 percent of the U.S. population. Another 39 applicant areas covering 236 additional counties have applied for the Secretary's designation. The 1990 Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act limited assistance to not more than 450 active designated areas. Since FY 2003, the number of USDA-designated RC&D areas has been 375.

Program Operations. An RC&D area is a locally defined multi-county area, sponsored and directed by an RC&D council that encourages natural resource conservation and utilization, accelerates economic development, and/or improves social conditions where needed to foster a sound local economy. The council consists of sponsors from the public and private sector representing a diverse cross-section of community interests including county and city governments, conservation districts, sub-state districts, tribal governments, and other interested private organizations in the area. An RC&D council epitomizes grassroots involvement and decision-making.

RC&D projects focus on several broad areas:

- Energy and resource management/protection projects which address soil erosion control, noxious plant and pest control, stream bank improvement, preservation of prime land, mined land reclamation, natural resource studies, energy conservation and development of alternative sources of energy, improvement of rural road infrastructure, and the protection, improvement, and development of fish and wildlife habitat.
- Waste management and utilization projects including the efficient and environmentally sound disposal of animal and solid wastes and composting and recycling of glass, metals, paper, wood, and furniture.
- Community improvement projects such as zoning studies, public trails, community centers, child nutrition and health projects; housing improvements, etc.
- Economic development projects such as marketing and producer surveys or feasibility studies, the formation or expansion of agriculture or natural resource related businesses or other businesses involved with value-added products, developing business or marketing plans, etc.
- Water projects that improve surface and groundwater quality and quantity.

- Recreation and tourism projects which create or improve water-based recreational areas for swimming, boating, and canoeing, and boat launch sites as well as non water-based recreational areas such golf courses, trails, ball parks and historic site preservation.

NRCS assists RC&D councils through an RC&D coordinator, who facilitates the development and implementation of an individualized and locally determined program (i.e., area plan). The RC&D coordinator also links the RC&D council with other Federal agencies, States, and local units of government to increase the Council's capacity to build effective public/private partnerships that result in strong rural community leadership and accomplishments.

FY 2010 Activities.

RC&D councils and their partners helped create 808 new businesses, expand 1,981 businesses, retain 4,218 businesses, and assist 396 businesses financially with funds totaling $10,900,000 thus supporting the administration's emphasis on rebuilding the economy. An estimated 5,929 jobs were created and 6,398 jobs retained through area projects, nationally. During FY 2010, RC&D councils also assisted 1,182 farm or ranch operations with agri-tourism activities and 849 farms or ranches with direct marketing from the field to the consumer via community supported agriculture groups restaurants, commercial stores, or public access farmers markets thus helping the rural sector.

Natural resources benefited from RC&D efforts in FY 2010 as well. RC&D projects created, protected or improved about 2.8 million acres of wildlife habitat, 169,000 acres of lakes and other water bodies, and 7,182 miles of streams. RC&D councils assisted over 1,649 animal agricultural operations with water quality projects; assisted with the construction or rehabilitation of 413 flood control structures; and preserved or protected over 2.1 million acres of agricultural land. RC&D councils in 20 States implemented renewable energy projects.

Through more than 3,963 workshops, tours, and seminars nationwide on agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, and wildlife, and over 4,837 training sessions on leadership development, grant writing, business development, non-profit management, and environmental education, RC&Ds helped nearly 1.14 million people develop new skills. RC&D councils also obtained over $351,100,000 in external grant funds in FY 2010 for projects that served more than 14.6 million individuals, including over 2.2 million economically or socially disadvantaged people.

Getting Conservation on the Ground.

Oregon: Farm Water Produces Electricity. The Northwest Oregon RC&D Council assisted with permit applications, and helped identify funding for a sustainable on-farm hydroelectricity project near McMinnville, Oregon. The farm receives 46–50 inches of rain per year, which is collected from a 175-acre watershed to provide water to two hydroelectric turbines. The turbines run efficiently with both high and low water volumes providing an electric output ranging from 500 watts to 30 kilowatts. The system generates 96,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per year which has dramatically reduced overhead costs and improved sustainability for the farming operation.

Massachusetts: Farm-Based Solar System Provides Electricity. The Massachusetts Farm Energy Program (MFEP) is a joint project of NRCS, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources and two RC&D areas. Working with MFEP, the Berkshire-Pioneer RC&D Council helped a 72-year-old family-owned farm acquire a $1.2 million solar array system to power the farm. In fact, the system provides more power than it needs, and sells the excess to the local power company. At a ribbon-cutting ceremony launching the farm solar system, local dignitaries watched the meter literally run backward as it distributed electricity.

New York: Keeping Farmers on the Land. The Hudson Mohawk RC&D Council, with funding from the New York Farm Viability Institute and the Hudson River Bank and Trust Co. Foundation, developed a farm-to-school guide and directory that connects schools in eastern New York that want to buy locally grown food with farmers in the area. Children are eating healthier food in school and learning about the local food system, and farmers are finding new sources of revenue. The Council also helped form the Northeast Livestock Processing Service Company LLC a company run by farmers to help other livestock farmers resolve processing issues and to assist with marketing. As a result, the RC&D Council has helped 94 livestock businesses survive, retaining 110 jobs. It has also helped 70 businesses expand and two new businesses come into existence, creating 14 new jobs.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
Healthy Forests Reserve Program

Project Statement
(On basis of available funds)

Program	2010 Actual Amount	2010 Actual Staff Years	2011 Estimated Amount	2011 Estimated Staff Years	Increase or Decrease	2012 Estimated Amount	2012 Estimated Staff Years
Healthy Forests Reserve Program:							
Technical Assistance	$ 78,776	1	--	--	--	--	--
Financial Assistance	250,662	--	$866,035	--	-$866,035	--	--
Total Direct Obligations ...	329,438	--	866,035	--	866,035	--	--
Unobligated Balance							
Brought Fwd……..	(-1,195,190)	--	(-866,035)	--	(+866,035)	--	--
Prior Year Recoveries……	(-283)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Unobligated Balance							
Carried Fwd……	(+866,035)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Adjusted Appropriation	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Obligational Authority.....	329,438	1	866,035	--	-866,035	--	--

Note: The 2008 Farm Bill provides $9,750,000 in FY 2011 and $9,750,000 in FY 2012 in mandatory funds. For this program see page 25-55 for further information.

Geographic Breakdown of Obligations and Staff Years
2010Actual and Estimated 2011 and 2012

	2010 Amount	2010 Staff Years	2011 Amount	2011 Staff Years	2012 Amount	2012 Staff Years
California	$25,000	--	--	--	--	--
Indiana	8,416	--	$231	--	--	--
Kentucky.....	24,989	1	--	--	--	--
Maine	5,548	--	4,451	--	--	--
Michigan.....	1,604	--	6,733	--	--	--
Minnesota	1,232	--	--	--	--	--
National Headquarters	-127	--	--	--	--	--
Ohio	8,405	--	243	--	--	--
Oregon	250,789	--	833,457	--	--	--
Pennsylvania.....	3,582	--	20,518	--	--	--
Undistributed	--	--	402	--	--	--
Total Obligations/Est.....	329,438	1	866,035	--	--	--

Classification by Objects
2010 Actual and Estimated 2011 and 2012

Personnel Compensation:		2010	2011	2012
Washington, D.C.		--	--	--
Field		$55,746	--	--
11	Total personnel compensation	55,746	--	--
12	Personnel benefits	14,749	--	--
	Total pers. comp. & benefits	70,495	--	--
Other Objects:				
21	Travel	878	--	--
25	Other services	3	$32,076	--
26.2	Supplies and materials	2,510	--	--
31	Equipment	4,890	--	--
32.1	Easements	250,789	833,959	--
41	Grants	-127	--	--
	Total other objects	258,943	866,035	--
Total, direct obligations		329,438	866,035	--

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
Farm Security and Rural Investment Programs

Food, Conservation, and Energy Act…….....	$3,384,441,775
Budget Estimate, 2012……...	3,763,972,000
Change in Estimate……	+379,530,225

Conservation programs included in this account are listed in the project statement below. The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008, (P.L. 110-246) program funding authorization will continue from the Commodity Credit Corporation.

Project Statement
(On basis of authorized level)

Project	2010 Actual Amount	2010 Actual Staff Years	2011 Estimated Amount	2011 Estimated Staff Years	Increase or Decrease	2012 Estimated Amount	2012 Estimated Staff Years
Wetlands Reserve Program ..	$630,139,090	217	$726,099,000	343	+$58,693,000	$784,792,000	363
Environmental Quality Incentives Program ……..	1,174,039,275	2,407	1,180,000,000	2,872	+228,000,000	1,408,000,000	3,374
Agricultural Water Enhancement Program.....	72,159,895	65	74,000,000	223	-14,000,000	60,000,000	147
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	82,926,265	126	85,000,000	150	-12,000,000	73,000,000	145
Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program	149,895,863	29	175,000,000	44	+25,000,000	200,000,000	49
Conservation Security Program..	222,169,415	154	203,406,000	132	-6,321,000	197,085,000	127
Conservation Stewardship Program..	389,812,968	496	600,834,000	540	+186,805,000	787,639,000	557
Grasslands Reserve Program	100,108,375	28	117,373,000	55	-50,167,000	67,206,000	44
Agricultural Management Assistance a/	7,249,707	12	7,500,000	33	-5,000,000	2,500,000	23
Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program ……..	42,877,502	85	72,000,000	171	-22,000,000	50,000,000	197
Carryover……	1,158,381	--	122,498	1	-122,498	--	--
Healthy Forests Reserve Program ……..	392,723	--	9,750,000	13	--	9,750,000	15
Carryover……..	7,223,828	6	9,357,277	10	-9,357,277	--	--
Conservation Reserve Program	59,563,157	529	124,000,000	1,158	--	124,000,000	1,159
Subtotal, Food, Conservation and Energy Program.....	2,939,716,444	4,154	3,384,441,775	5,745	+379,530,225	3,763,972,000	6,200
EPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative……	12,134,197	5	--	--	--	--	--
Other Reimbursable……..	791,572	1	--	--	--	--	--
Total, Food, Conservation And Energy Program……..	2,952,642,213	4,160	3,384,441,775	5,745	+379,530,225	3,763,972,000	6,200

a/ The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 authorizes $15 million in Agricultural Management Assistance for FY 2011 and FY 2012. The Act authorizes half of that funding for NRCS, or $7.5 million each year. A proposed savings of $5 million in FY 2012 reduces the total authorized level to $10 million and NRCS' portion to $2.5 million, as the entire savings is applied to NRCS.

Statement of Program

Output Metrics	Performance Targets		
	FY 2010 Estimated	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
Wetlands Reserve Program			
Farmland, forest land, and wetlands protected by conservation easements, acres	74,180	75,000	75,000
Environmental Quality Incentives Program			
Land with conservation applied to improve irrigation efficiency, acres	967,495	1,000,000	1,200,000
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program			
Non-Federal land with conservation applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality, acres	876,895	1,000,000	900,000
Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program			
Prime, unique or important farmland protected from conversion to non-agricultural uses by conservation easements, acres	53,898	45,000	45,000

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Farm Security and Rural Investment Programs

Geographic Breakdown of Obligations

2010 Actual

	WRP	CRP	EQIP	CStP	WHIP	FRPP	CSecP	AWEP	GRP	CBWP	HFRP	AMA a/
ALABAMA	$15,059,040	$654,142	$16,659,121	$5,431,061	$3,471,143	$568,434	$1,777,227	$1,372,228	$65,869	--	--	--
ALASKA	41,965	7,799	10,376,485	--	3,103,019	10,439	23,003	--	22,159	--	--	--
ARIZONA	64,912	--	23,942,401	4,199,016	615,727	8,983	279,886	--	84,488	--	--	--
ARKANSAS	18,841,792	741,825	24,512,380	12,727,425	4,091,188	--	8,173,920	842,284	67,790	--	$8,624	--
CALIFORNIA	28,781,863	47,514	91,860,096	7,092,029	2,856,292	5,132,343	4,746,015	23,926,892	147,277	--	--	--
COLORADO	1,527,994	928,276	38,011,135	12,997,585	790,622	6,581,176	3,717,308	1,012,638	144,648	--	--	--
CONNECTICUT	73,702	--	8,462,751	--	1,293,926	6,504,267	47,886	--	829,277	--	--	$118,290
DELAWARE	1,230,011	42,191	7,729,042	466,620	318,033	5,063,248	792,280	--	58	$2,503,952	--	138,527
FLORIDA	147,968,380	153,724	23,836,836	1,802,006	1,668,097	8,621,090	24,904	1,358,210	330,030	--	--	--
GEORGIA	5,635,569	654,613	21,609,249	11,613,715	2,130,541	24,472	2,937,490	2,029,395	36,547	--	92,816	--
HAWAII	92,355	24,463	9,494,663	327,218	319,606	15,463	388,603	--	109,061	--	--	336,854
IDAHO	5,119,516	497,904	16,428,652	4,809,361	395,267	1,373,318	12,117,626	3,808,744	57,272	--	--	--
ILLINOIS	10,326,417	5,405,318	15,572,456	10,664,267	297,792	16,871	7,712,938	75,760	40,048	--	--	--
INDIANA	13,414,067	3,881,488	15,555,677	6,346,573	1,007,306	--	6,780,800	1,273,807	44,049	--	1,348,018	--
IOWA	13,388,048	6,158,341	27,785,232	23,039,493	992,103	--	18,772,786	129,327	176,926	--	--	--
KANSAS	5,608,650	3,648,942	29,852,218	20,086,236	2,495,990	835,611	7,758,224	--	501,932	--	--	--
KENTUCKY	6,648,900	2,118,436	13,792,046	--	1,320,171	2,514,154	588,053	--	71,577	--	--	--
LOUISIANA	38,429,827	303,996	28,438,450	6,448,057	4,227,300	--	188,054	--	66,272	--	--	--
MAINE	345,935	77,429	13,235,617	720,967	2,693,992	674,251	648,650	--	15,658	--	44	195,282
MARYLAND	7,358,833	207,626	8,913,682	--	262,708	4,565,682	3,590,885	--	26,816	9,493,259	--	499,437
MASSACHUSETTS	2,927,949	52	8,804,065	--	1,054,791	8,844,152	25,896	--	20,651	--	--	251,434
MICHIGAN	4,554,009	890,077	21,166,935	5,880,242	1,508,257	6,272,636	6,551,002	2,377,573	93,378	--	--	--
MINNESOTA	15,355,387	3,621,848	36,545,312	25,543,951	828,578	1,434,207	5,114,349	1,302,081	53,327	--	12	--
MISSISSIPPI	26,062,396	765,767	23,438,826	9,941,544	3,730,554	--	346,280	2,277,899	57,272	--	1,016,906	--
MISSOURI	22,550,074	2,652,902	33,919,110	20,921,841	3,378,698	20,891	24,672,529	--	218,330	--	--	--
MONTANA	3,367,276	916,023	28,791,017	16,624,598	1,430,059	2,652,862	9,822,771	--	176,158	--	--	--
NEBRASKA	24,182,896	2,240,579	30,601,149	24,388,522	1,021,740	1,144,373	10,624,054	5,696,841	92,791	--	--	--
NEVADA	43,865	--	9,972,297	379,031	982,117	5,435,925	258,197	--	16,443	--	--	817,032
NEW HAMPSHIRE	9,894,702	--	6,637,163	--	1,310,450	2,681,474	1,712	--	13,329	--	--	155,569
NEW JERSEY	1,260,456	73,637	6,893,733	--	582,749	9,130,636	131,591	242,943	10,818	--	--	368,792
NEW MEXICO	999,534	287,585	25,576,629	6,314,928	952,948	617,841	1,121,374	454,119	216,697	--	--	--
NEW YORK	6,499,577	212,873	17,847,249	--	1,253,828	4,308,195	1,114,280	515,616	122,263	2,280,662	--	698,551
N CAROLINA	10,096,124	532,198	17,538,483	1,846,935	823,584	2,620,532	849,074	73,316	2,861	--	--	--
N DAKOTA	35,303,541	2,100,909	21,538,063	21,026,489	724,553	10,606	7,807,993	3,027,072	86,001	--	--	--
OHIO	9,528,214	4,961,678	23,693,561	--	284,448	3,765,463	14,616,223	--	130,100	--	--	--
OKLAHOMA	8,719,833	361,885	29,209,049	18,621,669	1,123,132	345,726	4,774,082	994,677	178,985	--	1,443,068	--
OREGON	12,403,936	278,092	17,353,571	8,632,751	1,208,160	6,753	21,942,217	3,418,001	49,333	--	2,999,594	--
PENNSYLVANIA	4,299,902	1,441,043	17,073,310	--	1,062,266	6,820,254	1,511,330	--	133,039	13,489,745	--	1,056,075

	WRP	CRP	EQIP	CStP	WHIP	FRPP	CSecP	AWEP	GRP	CBWP	HFRP	AMA a/
PUERTO RICO	--	--	7,116,841	66,685	--	--	161,697	--	12,568	--	--	--
RHODE ISLAND	552,156	--	4,888,016	--	981,340	3,048,425	23,164	--	133	--	--	95,433
S CAROLINA	5,421,211	458,996	9,295,885	--	2,681,134	3,564,544	2,149,902	--	40,278	--	--	--
S DAKOTA	20,089,449	3,627,409	19,627,226	16,330,997	779,138	307	3,361,141	--	301,594	--	--	--
TENNESSEE	17,297,087	746,874	14,616,925	--	1,079,685	1,271,533	1,411,552	--	99,224	--	--	--
TEXAS	38,727,905	2,213,730	96,593,939	19,257,112	8,834,117	2,110,064	1,423,831	5,722,539	771,027	--	--	--
UTAH	1,676,707	174,508	21,452,804	2,066,806	315,796	270,408	2,801,608	--	36,395	--	--	587,557
VERMONT	1,449,455	99,446	11,191,193	--	1,295,718	3,216,785	50,306	--	95,602	--	--	411,118
VIRGINIA	537,751	563,668	14,729,187	--	865,852	1,226,881	773,764	--	173,522	12,813,515	--	--
WASHINGTON	1,460,351	300,931	20,631,198	6,712,998	1,309,613	6,301,953	5,626,416	2,023,251	64,963	--	--	--
WEST VIRGINIA	597,135	92,763	8,298,138	--	1,115,721	5,798,149	269,555	--	285,876	2,557,472	--	336,598
WISCONSIN	11,344,294	1,449,079	21,369,708	8,672,744	779,746	1,942,949	4,488,382	--	61,387	--	--	--
WYOMING	2,603,215	169,778	18,037,080	4,987,559	678,265	21,093,116	2,020,633	--	217,590	--	--	1,183,158
NATIONAL HDQTR	7,068,794	1,890,373	69,809,466	6,998,928	3,323,805	1,110,963	3,551,855	1,764,280	93,009,136	--	242	--
CENTERS	1,597,553	880,432	13,713,958	--	--	--	1,704,117	434,159	--	--	--	--
FY 2010 Total Obligations	$630,139,090	$59,563,157	$1,174,039,275	$389,812,968	$82,926,265	$149,895,863	$222,169,415	$72,159,895	$100,108,375	$44,035,883	$7,616,551	$7,249,707

a/ AMA actuals include only those AMA obligations made by NRCS.

COMMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION
FOOD, CONSERVATION, AND ENERGY ACT OF 2008

WETLANDS RESERVE PROGRAM
STATUS OF PROGRAM

Current Activities

Background. The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) was authorized by Section 1237 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-198), as amended by the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-624), the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-127), the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-171), and the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246), to assist owners in restoring and protecting wetlands. WRP is funded by the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

WRP is a voluntary program that provides technical and financial assistance to enable eligible landowners to protect and restore valuable wetland ecosystems, including associated habitats such as uplands, riparian areas, and forest lands. WRP addresses wetland, wildlife habitat, soil, water and related natural resource concerns on private lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner. The program achieves solutions to local community issues related to farms, ranches, rural lands, and other areas by establishing easements and long-term agreements on eligible farmlands and by establishing 30-year contracts on Tribal lands. This unique program offers landowners an opportunity to establish, at minimal cost, long-term conservation and wildlife habitat enhancement practices and protection.

The goal of WRP is to achieve the greatest wetlands functions and values, along with optimum wildlife habitat, on every acre enrolled in the program. This is accomplished by restoring former wetland and associated habitats on lands that were converted for agricultural use and have a high likelihood of successful restoration. Wetlands provide a variety of important environmental services that are increasingly valued by society. These include filtering nutrients, trapping sediments and associated pollutants, improving water quality, providing fish and wildlife habitat, dampening floodwater runoff peaks, recharging aquifers, buffering shorelines from storm impacts, and myriad other benefits.

Over 50 percent of the nation's wetlands in the lower 48 States have been lost since colonial times and the greatest potential for restoration exists on private lands. Over 80 percent of lands on which restoration is economically feasible are in private ownership. To achieve successful restoration that maximizes benefits to both the landowners and the public, WRP focuses on:

- Enrolling marginal lands that have a history of crop failures or low production yields,
- Restoring and protecting wetland values on degraded wetlands,
- Maximizing wildlife benefits,
- Achieving cost-effective restoration with a priority on benefits to migratory birds,
- Protecting and improving water quality,
- Reducing the impact of flood events,
- Increasing ecosystem resilience, and
- Promoting scientific and educational uses of WRP projects.

Under WRP, at least 70 percent of the wetlands and associated habitats are restored to their original condition to the extent practicable; the remaining 30 percent of the project area may be restored or enhanced to alternative habitat conditions. For example, instead of restoring a bottomland hardwood site to all trees, a portion of the site could be restored to an emergent marsh condition if the landowner or NRCS wanted to create habitat for targeted wildlife species. This flexibility allows NRCS to implement projects that meet landowner objectives, address specific species or habitat needs, and maximize wildlife and environmental benefits.

Eligibility. WRP is available in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands of the United States, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Island, and the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands on all lands meeting any of the following eligibility criteria:

- Altered, cropped, and grazed wetlands along with upland buffer areas;
- Rangeland and wooded areas where hydrology is significantly degraded but substantially restorable;
- Croplands or grasslands subject to flooding from overflow of closed basin, lake, or pothole;
- Riparian areas linking protected wetlands;
- Natural wetlands that contribute to the value of the easement restoration area;
- Eligible priority wetland acres already enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program; and
- Wetlands restored under a Federal or State cost-share program with an easement or deed restriction with duration of less than 30 years.

Financial Assistance. WRP provides landowners four methods to enroll acreage:

- Permanent easement: Easement duration is in perpetuity. Participants are provided an easement payment after the easement is filed. The payment is for 100 percent of the value of the land, with compensation determined as the lowest of: 1) an appraisal or area-wide market survey, 2) a geographic cap, or 3) landowner offer. In addition, NRCS pays up to 100 percent of the eligible restoration costs.
- 30-year easement: Easement duration is 30 years. Landowners receive an easement payment after the easement is filed that is equivalent to 75 percent of the value for a permanent easement; landowners also receive up to 75 percent of the eligible restoration costs.
- Restoration cost-share agreement: Restoration cost-share agreements are made available to participating landowners as an alternative mechanism to restore wetlands without requiring the landowner to enroll the land as an easement. Agreements are generally for a 10-year period, although longer agreement periods may be required for unique projects that are funded at a higher level. There is no easement payment; however, NRCS pays up to 75 percent of the eligible restoration costs.
- 30-year contract: Acreage owned by Native American Tribes can be enrolled through the use of a 30-year contract that is equivalent in value to a 30-year easement.

Technical Assistance. NRCS conducts ecological and cost ranking and develops a preliminary site plan for the offered acres with input from State wildlife agencies and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Once the landowner accepts an offer, NRCS designs and implements the conservation practices necessary to restore the identified habitats on the easement, contract, or agreement area.

NRCS continues to provide assistance to the landowner throughout the life of the project, after the initial completion of the restoration activities. NRCS works cooperatively with the private landowners to develop management and maintenance plans, conduct monitoring and enforcement, identify enhancement or repair needs, and provide biological and engineering advice on how to achieve optimum results for wetland dependant wildlife or other desired ecosystem services.

WRP Partnership Activities. In FY 2010, NRCS continued to expand partnership efforts with conservation entities. Ducks Unlimited, numerous State wildlife agencies, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Waterfowl Association, The Nature Conservancy, Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, Mississippi Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the California Waterfowl Association, and other conservation partners supplemented NRCS capacity with additional restoration expertise and implementation capability. Others contributing technical expertise to the delivery of WRP include the National Association of Conservation Districts, State associations of conservation districts, U.S. Forest Service, local conservation districts, and technical service providers.

FY 2010 Activities.

WRP Acreage. During FY 2010, NRCS enrolled a total of 272,762 acres in WRP in 1,414 projects, as the table below shows. Of these, the majority were in easements (206,094 acres in 951 permanent easements and 61,935 acres in 30-year easements). The average project size was 193 acres, compared with 162 acres in FY 2009. Also during FY 2010, NRCS created, restored, and enhanced 129,082 acres of wetlands.

Type of Project	FY 2010 Projects	FY 2010 Acres Enrolled
30-year agreement (with Tribes)	4	453
Restoration cost-share agreement	31	4,190
30-year easement	428	61,935
Permanent easement	951	206,094
Total	1,414	272,762

Acres are the specific controlling factor for WRP. Funding needs are determined by projecting the number of acres by program option (i.e. permanent easements, 30-year easements, 30-year contracts, cost share agreements) and the geographic rate cap for the location of the acres to be enrolled. The cumulative acres enrolled in WRP throughout the life of the program is 2,347,128, as the table below shows. This represents the total initial enrollment less those projects that were subsequently cancelled or terminated.

Enrollments	Cumulative Acres
Total no. enrolled	2,347,128
No. of easement acres perfected	1,788,488
No. of acres with restoration cost-share agreements	170,946
No. of acres enrolled through 30-year contracts with Tribes	2,631
Projects	**Cumulative Projects**
No. of easement projects	11,429
No. of restoration cost-share agreements	1,226
No. of 30-year contracts with Tribes	16

The type of wetlands restored varies from vernal pools to bottomland hardwood forests, to prairie potholes, to coastal marshes, to mountain meadows, but consists primarily of floodplain forests and emergent marsh wetlands. Restoration and protection of these varied and valuable wetland types accounts for 84 percent of the acreage enrolled in WRP, while the remaining 16 percent of WRP acres includes adjacent upland habitats that provide nesting habitat and buffer area to the wetland areas. Most acres offered into WRP occur in areas that, despite having been drained or cleared for agricultural production, are still subject to frequent flooding or prolonged saturation, making them ideally suited for restoration and usually marginal for agricultural production. Over 84 percent of the acres enrolled in WRP are converted but restorable habitats, while the remaining 16 percent is existing habitat that is protected and further improved by the WRP restoration efforts.

Initiatives and Partnership Projects: NRCS has a number of initiatives and program options that provide targeted delivery of conservation assistance to address specific resource concerns on a geographic, species, habitat, natural disaster, or other basis that benefits from a tailored or rapid response. In FY 2010, WRP was a key tool in delivering conservation benefits to these initiative efforts.

- The Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative was developed and offered in FY 2010 to provide critical habitat resources for feeding, loafing and resting to wetland-dependant wildlife impacted by the Gulf Oil Spill. The WRP component provided landowners technical and financial assistance to restore or further enhance existing WRP easements to increase food resources for migratory birds in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Missouri. As a result NRCS provided assistance to over 360 landowners in the affected states and provided additional habitat on 57,382 on existing WRP acres.
- The Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP) is an enrollment option in WRP that provides partners an opportunity to target WRP outreach, assistance, and enrollment efforts and allows NRCS to leverage partners' technical and financial assistance to increase and improve delivery of WRP to landowners. In FY 2010, WREP proposals were solicited both nationwide and as part of the larger Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI). The nationwide WREP solicitation resulted in eight partner proposals, of which five were approved in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, and Nebraska. The MRBI-WREP solicitation resulted in 20 partner proposals, of which 17 were approved. The MRBI-WREP initiative has a specific emphasis on improving the quality of water that enters the Mississippi River and includes additional monitoring efforts to

enable NRCS to quantify water quality benefits associated with water allowed to course through restored wetlands prior to entering the river. NRCS developed partnership agreements for the approved proposals; these agreements resulted in 37 new easement enrollments on 2,408 acres in FY 2010.

- The Prairie Pothole Region initiative area includes Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and portions of Iowa and Montana. The Prairie Pothole Region is the core of what was once the largest grassland expanse in the world and includes millions of shallow depressions left behind after glacial retreat. The potholes are rich in plant and aquatic life and support globally significant populations of breeding waterfowl. However, agricultural development has resulted in considerable wetland drainage, such that the Prairie Pothole Region is number one on the 25 most important and threatened waterfowl habitats in North America. NRCS conducts an annual survey of landowners in the pothole region to inform them of opportunities to restore and protect these critical habitats through WRP and assess their interest in the program. In FY 2010, NRCS enrolled 213 projects on 31,758 acres in North and South Dakota as part of the Prairie Pothole Region initiative.

Getting Conservation on the Ground.
Florida: Large Contiguous Easement Offers Multiple Benefits. In July 2010, USDA announced a major wetland restoration project in Florida's Fisheating Creek, part of the Northern Everglades Watershed. NRCS, in partnership with four landowners on five ranches, is creating one of the largest contiguous easement acquisitions in the history of WRP, at 26,080 acres. The enrollment of these five properties will result in significant wetland restoration and protection, and provide important habitat for rare, endangered and threatened animals, birds, and plants.

The restoration effort will enable Florida to manage Lake Okeechobee water levels in a way that mimics natural conditions, making it less likely to require large releases of water that damage the region's productive estuaries. Increasing the duration of water storage in wetlands is expected to also reduce the nutrient loads moved into the Everglades and south Florida's coastal systems that have historically resulted in eutrophication and species changes. NRCS already has other WRP projects in this sub-basin, and the project will help connect the open spaces. Contiguous natural areas along the region's creeks and rivers, on cattle ranches, and on existing conservation lands provide the large open spaces, food resources, and connectivity needed to sustain wide-ranging animals like the Florida black bear, whooping crane, and the Florida panther. Numerous rare and imperiled (Federally endangered and threatened) species of vertebrates are documented to occur on these ranches.

NRCS is partnering with the South Florida Water Management District and The Nature Conservancy of Florida. The value of the combined in-kind contribution of these partners is estimated to be $650,000. It is anticipated that this project will stimulate jobs in tourism and recreation by creating opportunities to observe rare wildlife in natural settings. Additionally, by using nature to filter phosphorus, the project may help reduce the amount of capital investment in water treatment plants. It will certainly improve the health of Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM

Current Activities
Background. Section 2301 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-171, May 13, 2002) 16 U.S.C. 3839aa and Section 2503 of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246) re-authorized and amended the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), created by the Food Security Act of 1985 as amended by the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (P. L. 104-127, April 4, 1996) (16 U.S.C. 3839aa). The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) funds EQIP.

Program Objectives. America faces serious environmental challenges which financial and technical assistance delivered through EQIP can help address. Federal, Tribal, State and private lands face risks to the long-term sustainability of our natural resources and pressing environmental concerns. For example, nutrient loading associated with agricultural production reaching the Mississippi River and Chesapeake Bay for example, is associated with hypoxia and loss of productive recreation and fishing grounds. Climate change poses multiple challenges to agriculture: changing growing conditions for producers, new opportunities for production of climate-

friendly renewable fuels, and the desire on the part of many producers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. To meet these challenges, EQIP promotes the voluntary application of farming and other land use practices that maintain or improve the condition of soil, water, air, and other natural resources. The program assists agricultural and forest land users in identifying natural resource issues and opportunities to improve their agricultural operation and provides technical and financial assistance to address them in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner. EQIP promoted practices meet a variety of environmental and natural resource challenges. In the Mississippi River basin and the Chesapeake Bay Watershed EQIP practices reduce nutrients and sediment to improve water quality and habitat for fish and wildlife. EQIP-promoted practices address water quantity and quality concerns in the Ogallala Aquifer, combating declining water tables affecting eight States, including Colorado, South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas. EQIP-promoted practices reduce the threat to the habitat of Endangered Species Act Candidates Sage Grouse and Lesser Prairie Chicken and provide critical habitat for migratory birds to offset losses due to oil damage from the Deepwater Horizon well.
NRCS carries out EQIP in a manner that optimizes environmental benefits. It provides:

- Flexible technical and financial assistance to farmers and ranchers that face the most serious threats to soil, water, air, and related natural resources;
- Assistance to farmers and ranchers in complying with Federal, State, and local environmental regulatory requirements;
- Assistance to farmers and ranchers in making beneficial, cost-effective changes to cropping systems; grazing management; manure, nutrient, pest, or irrigation management; land uses; or other measures needed to conserve and improve soil, water, air, and related natural resources; and
- Consolidated and simplified conservation planning and implementation to reduce the administration burden on producers.

National Priorities. The 2002 and 2008 Farm Bills require that at least 60 percent of the financial assistance funds for EQIP be targeted to livestock-related operations, including both confined livestock operations and grazed lands. The 2008 Farm Bill added energy conservation as a national priority. After an extensive effort to invite input from the public, agricultural and environmental organizations, Conservation Districts, agencies, and other partners, NRCS established the following national priorities for EQIP:

- Reduction of nonpoint source pollution, such as nutrients, sediment, pesticides, or excess salinity in impaired watersheds consistent with Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) where available;
- Reduction of contamination from agricultural point sources, such as concentrated animal feeding operations;
- Reduction of surface and groundwater contamination and conservation of surface and groundwater resources;
- Reduction of emissions, such as particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, and ozone precursors and depleters that contribute to air quality impairment violations of National Ambient Air Quality Standards;
- Reduction in soil erosion and sedimentation; and
- Promotion of at-risk species habitat conservation.

Eligibility. To participate in EQIP, both the land and the applicant must be eligible. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pastureland, private nonindustrial forestland, and other farm or ranch lands. The land must have an identified natural resource concern that poses a serious threat to soil, water, air, or related resources by reason of land use practices, soil type, terrain, climatic conditions, topography, flooding, saline characteristics, or other natural resource factors or natural hazard. Publicly owned land is eligible when the land is under private control for the contract period, and is included in the participant's operating unit, and must have written authorization from the government agency to apply conservation practices. For irrigation-related practices, the land must have a history of actively irrigating the land unit for two out of the last five years.

Applicants must be an agricultural producer, have control of the land for the life of the contract, be in compliance with Farm Bill provisions (highly erodible land, wetland conservation, protection of tenants and sharecroppers), be within appropriate program payment limitations and adjusted gross income requirements, and develop an EQIP plan of operations. Applications are accepted year round at local USDA Service Centers, but there are application cut-off dates that vary by State.

Conservation Plan. NRCS works with the participant to develop the EQIP plan of operations that forms the basis of the EQIP contract. The plan may be developed with NRCS technical assistance or EQIP may provide financial assistance to obtain the services of a certified technical service provider (TSP) who develops a conservation plan for the offered acres initially determined eligible. The plan identifies the conservation practices and activities that will be implemented through EQIP.

Installation of conservation practices and systems must contribute to an improvement in the identified natural resource concern. Conservation practices include structural practices, land management practices, vegetative practices, forest management practices, and other improvements that achieve the program purposes. EQIP activities may also include the development of specialized plans such as comprehensive nutrient management plans, agricultural energy management plans, dryland transition plans, forest management plans, integrated pest management, and other similar plans. These plans and practices must meet NRCS technical standards adapted for local conditions.

Financial Assistance. EQIP payment rates may be up to 75 percent of the estimated incurred costs or up to 100 percent of income foregone of certain conservation practices. Historically underserved producers, including socially disadvantaged, limited resource, or beginning farmers and ranchers, and tribal members, may be eligible for payment rates up to 90 percent for estimated incurred costs. Contracts are for a minimum term that ends one year after the implementation of the last scheduled practices and a maximum term of ten years.

Total conservation payments are limited to $300,000 in financial assistance per individual or entity between FY 2009 through FY 2014 regardless of the number of farms or contracts. A waiver of the $300,000 payment limit may be granted by the Chief for projects of special environmental significance that will result in significant environmental improvements as determined by NRCS policy. The payment limitation for these contracts of special environmental significance may be extended to $450,000.

Technical Assistance. Producers receive technical assistance from NRCS or certified TSP to develop the conservation plan and establish required practices for lands accepted into EQIP. EQIP complements many State and local programs in addressing specific local conservation and natural resource issues.

Partnerships. NRCS cooperates with Federal, State, and local partners to address local and national conservation issues. Partners include the National Association of Conservation Districts, State Associations of Conservation Districts, and local conservation districts in efforts to deliver a program beneficial to program participants and the environment. Through interactive communication between the local community, local interest groups, and State and Federal agencies, the partnership provides the entities with information and resources needed to address local priorities and implement State and national programs, such as EQIP.

The Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) is a voluntary conservation initiative that enables the use of EQIP and other conservation programs, combined with resources of eligible partners, to provide financial and technical assistance to owners and operators of agricultural and nonindustrial private forest lands. Under CCPI, NRCS enters into partnership agreements with eligible entities that want to enhance conservation outcomes on these lands in an effort to leverage funds to get more conservation benefit. Eligible partners include Federally recognized Tribes, State and local units of government, producer associations, farmer cooperatives, institutions of higher education, and nongovernmental organizations with a history of working cooperatively with producers. NRCS provides funds not to the partners but directly to producers to implement the agreed upon conservation practices. Partners provide additional technical or administrative resources to assist with planning, implementation, and/or monitoring of project effectiveness.

FY 2010 Activities.

In FY 2010, EQIP financial assistance obligations by States were almost $840 million in 36,500 contracts covering an estimated 13 million acres. In addition to regular EQIP projects, these funds also supported projects in resource based initiatives such as air quality, on-farm energy audits, migratory bird habitat, and the Mississippi River Basin, and projects in initiatives, such as organic production and seasonal high tunnels, that focus on environmental benefit and agricultural production as compatible goals.

Air Quality – In FY 2010, NRCS provided $37.5 million in financial and technical assistance to 12 States through the national Air Quality Initiative to help producers meet requirements of the Clean Air Act. Through this initiative, NRCS provides assistance to farmers and ranchers to reduce air pollution generated from agricultural operations in areas designated by the Environmental Protection Agency as non-attainment areas for ozone and particulate matter. During FY 2010, over 950 contracts supported some 3,800 practices on more than 220,000 acres.

Energy – In FY 2010, NRCS worked to provide financial assistance to more than 240 producers for on-farm energy audits by offering the Agricultural Energy Management Plan through EQIP. NRCS also supported the sustainable production of renewable energy sources on farms throughout the country and encouraged farmers to conserve fuel and reduce greenhouse gases. In partnership with the private sector and other organizations, NRCS is developing technical tools and training to evaluate and reduce agricultural energy consumption through implementation of on-farm energy audit recommendations and to help producers adapt plants and practices for better energy efficiency and on-farm energy production.

Organics - The Organic Initiative is a nationwide special initiative within EQIP to provide assistance to organic producers as well as producers in the process of transitioning to organic production. In FY 2010, NRCS obligated nearly $24 million to treat 148,000 acres in organic production or in transition to organic production. The most often prescribed practices include nutrient management, cover crop, pest management, conservation crop rotation, and prescribed grazing. Each of these conservation practices has specific environmental benefits, especially when applied as a complete system of practices. One critical benefit is sustaining the natural physical, biological, and chemical properties of the soil, which is vital to organic production. The seasonal high tunnel interim practice is also one of the most prescribed practices in the Organic Initiative. As an interim practice, NRCS is conducting a three-year evaluation on the environmental benefit of the practice.

EQIP is highly popular among producers, and demand for the program is high across the country. Nationally, 48 percent of qualifying projects (valid applications) were funded in FY 2010, as the table below shows.

FY 2010 Total EQIP Program Demands[1]

State	Total No. of Applications Received	No. of Valid Applications	No. of Valid Applications Funded	No. of Valid Applications Not Funded	Share of Valid Applications Funded Percent	Average Contract Amount	Estimated Value of Unfunded Applications
ALABAMA	3,317	2,287	1,279	1,008	55.92%	$9,935	$10,014,480
ALASKA	175	145	142	3	97.93	54,669	164,007
ARIZONA	400	313	189	124	60.38	94,981	11,777,644
ARKANSAS	3,033	2,419	946	1,473	39.11	19,935	29,364,255
CALIFORNIA	5,456	4,458	1,974	2,484	44.28	37,733	93,728,772
COLORADO	1,685	1,438	760	678	52.85	35,780	24,258,840
CONNECTICUT	203	177	144	33	81.36	43,233	1,426,689
DELAWARE	306	130	129	1	99.23	46,216	46,216
FLORIDA	1,511	1,031	437	594	42.39	40,117	23,829,498
GEORGIA	3,400	2,820	1,271	1,549	45.07	13,010	20,152,490
HAWAII	213	183	110	73	60.11	53,824	3,929,152
IDAHO	899	493	313	180	63.49	39,146	7,046,280
ILLINOIS	1,561	1,415	899	516	63.53	12,474	6,436,584
INDIANA	1,613	1,355	505	850	37.27	24,699	20,994,150

State	Total No. of Applications Received	No. of Valid Applications	No. of Valid Applications Funded	No. of Valid Applications Not Funded	Share of Valid Applications Funded Percent	Average Contract Amount	Estimated Value of Unfunded Applications
IOWA	3,975	3,311	1,267	2,044	38.27	$16,350	$33,419,400
KANSAS	2,560	2,034	937	1,097	46.07	$24,042	$26,374,074
KENTUCKY	2,437	1,505	528	977	35.08	19,946	19,487,242
LOUISIANA	3,655	2,959	1,064	1,895	35.96	22,479	42,597,705
MAINE	1,192	1,115	484	631	43.41	21,062	13,290,122
MARYLAND	516	422	200	222	47.39	32,875	7,298,250
MASSACHUSETTS	492	371	249	122	67.12	26,665	3,253,130
MICHIGAN	1,354	1,241	538	703	43.35	34,991	24,598,673
MINNESOTA	2,198	1,909	1,156	753	60.56	24,369	18,349,857
MISSISSIPPI	4,747	3,441	1,904	1,537	55.33	9,887	15,196,319
MISSOURI	4,549	3,777	1,507	2,270	39.90	17,722	40,228,940
MONTANA	1,655	1,090	582	508	53.39	37,477	19,038,316
NEBRASKA	4,404	3,432	1,146	2,286	33.39	20,769	47,477,934
NEVADA	216	122	101	21	82.79	74,714	1,568,994
NEW HAMPSHIRE	525	452	295	157	65.27	16,175	2,539,475
NEW JERSEY	242	149	143	6	95.97	35,704	214,224
NEW MEXICO	1,281	982	531	451	54.07	36,715	16,558,465
NEW YORK	1,538	1,222	415	807	33.96	34,486	27,830,202
NORTH CAROLINA	1,672	1,149	498	651	43.34	26,740	17,407,740
NORTH DAKOTA	1,762	1,294	798	496	61.67	20,258	10,047,968
OHIO	2,999	2,293	1,218	1,075	53.12	16,037	17,239,775
OKLAHOMA	5,258	3,767	1,207	2,560	32.04	18,095	46,323,200
OREGON	1,219	931	527	404	56.61	25,016	10,106,464
PENNSYLVANIA	2,185	1,463	397	1,066	27.14	32,184	34,308,144
RHODE ISLAND	282	229	197	32	86.03	17,820	570,240
SOUTH CAROLINA	621	340	333	7	97.94	20,339	142,373
SOUTH DAKOTA	1,476	1,181	669	512	56.65	21,984	11,255,808
TENNESSEE	2,129	1,509	969	540	64.21	11,291	6,097,140
TEXAS	7,755	6,113	3,913	2,200	64.01	19,388	42,653,600
UTAH	965	625	323	302	51.68	47,103	14,225,106
VERMONT	701	497	419	78	84.31	20,448	1,594,944
VIRGINIA	969	761	353	408	46.39	31,912	13,020,096
WASHINGTON	1,153	781	462	319	59.15	33,940	10,826,860
WEST VIRGINIA	1,861	1,563	287	1,276	18.36	20,130	25,685,880
WISCONSIN	2,166	1,592	1,035	557	65.01	16,471	9,174,347

State	Total No. of Applications Received	No. of Valid Applications	No. of Valid Applications Funded	No. of Valid Applications Not Funded	Share of Valid Applications Funded Percent	Average Contract Amount	Estimated Value of Unfunded Applications
WYOMING	1,002	812	354	458	43.60	$39,331	$18,013,598
PACIFIC BASIN	85	78	68	10	87.18	10,020	100,200
CARIBBEAN AREA	462	351	327	24	93.16	15,819	379,656
Total	98,030	75,527	36,499	39,028	48.33%	23,000	901,663,518

[1] Source: Protracts as of October 1, 2010. Estimated value of unfunded applications determined by average contract amount of valid applications funded.

Significant EQIP Accomplishments

Conservation Innovation Grants. The Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) component of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides a competitive grants program that stimulates innovative science based approaches to leveraging Federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection in conjunction with agricultural production. CIG enables NRCS to work with other public and private entities to accelerate transfer and adoption of promising conservation technologies, management systems and innovative approaches to address some of the Nation's most pressing natural resource concerns. CIG projects lead to the transfer of these cutting edge technologies, systems, and approaches into NRCS policy, technical manuals, guides, and references or to the private sector.

In FY 2010, NRCS awarded nearly $18 million in CIG for 61 projects representing 43 states and U.S. territories of the Pacific. Grant recipients provide matching funds to CIG bringing the total value of the approved projects to more than $35 million. In the FY 2010 CIG application process, projects targeting technology transfer to historically underserved groups were funded the highest, placing outreach efforts as a priority for CIG.

- National: The 43 projects selected (approximately $12.8 million) will demonstrate the use of innovative technologies or approaches to address specific natural resource concerns nationwide.
- Chesapeake Bay Watershed: The six projects selected (approximately $2.3 million) will demonstrate the use of innovative technologies or approaches to address specific natural resource concerns within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. These projects will tackle specific deep-rooted agricultural problems that contribute significantly to degraded Chesapeake Bay water quality (e.g., manure/poultry litter nutrient excesses, legacy sediment, and the cumulative effect of small dairies).
- Mississippi River Basin: The twelve projects selected (approximately $2.9 million) will demonstrated the use of innovative technologies or approaches to address specific natural resource concerns within the Mississippi River Basin and address the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative objectives to manage and optimize nutrient management, reduce downstream nutrient loads, maintain agricultural productivity, and enhance wildlife and other ecosystem services.

Historically Underserved Producers. NRCS makes specific efforts to provide outreach and information to producers that have been historically underserved, including socially disadvantaged, limited resource, and beginning farmers and ranchers. Applicants may elect or not elect to identify themselves in several categories at the time of application. The tables below identify the number of applications and contract funded from the applicants that elected to identify themselves in a historically underserved category.

Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers[2]

Socially Disadvantaged Groups	Number of Applications	Number of Contracts Funded	Percent Funded	Dollars Obligated
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1,443	533	36.9%	$23,194,279
Asian	697	239	34.3	8,243,180

Black	2,484	966	38.9	10,926,993
Socially Disadvantaged Groups	**Number of Applications**	**Number of Contracts Funded**	**Percent Funded**	**Dollars Obligated**
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	274	152	55.5	3,749,428
Hispanic	1,992	951	47.7	20,825,051

[2] Source: ProTracts as of October 1, 2010.

Limited Resource and Beginning Farmers and Ranchers[3]

Other Historically Underserved Groups	**Number of Applications**	**Number of Contracts**	**Percent Funded**	**Dollars Obligated**
Limited Resource Farmer/Rancher	2,928	1243	42.5	$23,125,887
Beginning Farmer/Rancher	11,709	5450	46.5	134,944,240

[3] Source: ProTracts as of October 1, 2010

Getting Conservation on the Ground.

Seasonal High Tunnels: Popular Pilot Project Promoting Conservation Has Producer and Consumer Benefits. Under the USDA *Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food* initiative, NRCS is providing financial assistance for seasonal high tunnels as part of a three-year trial to determine their effectiveness in conserving water, reducing pesticide use, maintaining vital soil nutrients, increasing yields, and providing other benefits to growers. Seasonal high tunnels are structures made of ribs of plastic or metal pipe covered with layers of plastic sheeting. Easy to build, maintain, and move, high tunnels modify the climate inside to create more favorable conditions for vegetable and other specialty crops grown in the natural soil beneath. Unlike greenhouses, seasonal high tunnels use no energy other than natural sunlight – saving money and valuable energy resources. Altogether, NRCS obligated $13 million through EQIP and the Agriculture Management Assistance program in FY 2010 for more than 2,422 tunnels. In Alabama, a farmer who is committed to conservation and grows a broad assortment of crops using micro irrigation installed with USDA assistance recently added a seasonal high tunnel to his operation. The high tunnel is enabling him to grow tomatoes well past the traditional growing season, and he expects it will also help reduce his energy use and improve both soil and water quality as a result of reduced pesticide and nutrient inputs.

Missouri: Private Landowners Provide Habitat for Migratory Birds Affected by Gulf Oil Spill. In FY 2010, NRCS announced the Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative (MBHI) to try to minimize the likelihood of southward migrating birds coming into contact with or using oil impacted areas. The initiative is an effort to ensure adequate food sources are available to compensate for food resources that may be reduced, contaminated, or eliminated because of the oil spill. Through MBHI, NRCS partnered with producers to manage portions of their land to provide additional food and habitat for migrating birds. It is estimated that 40-50 million birds migrate annually down the Mississippi Alluvial Valley. Missouri received over 500 applications for the initiative, potentially impacting 130,000 acres. Using EQIP, NRCS developed conservation plans and EQIP contracts to help producers enhance habitat by flooding fields and establishing or maintaining vegetation for cover and food. Partners in Missouri include the Missouri Department of Conservation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, USA Rice, and the National Cotton Council in an effort to leverage both financial and technical resources.

Wisconsin: Low-Cost Management Practices Address Phosphorus Concentration in Pecatonica River. Through the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI), NRCS is working with the Pleasant Valley Pilot Project to reduce phosphorus loading to the Pecatonica River. The Pecatonica Pilot Project is testing the ideas proclaimed by the Wisconsin Buffer Initiative: that water quality will be measurably improved by targeting just the farms contributing the highest amounts of phosphorus to the stream and that implementing “soft” low-cost management type practices first will be more effective than high-cost structural practices. Inventorying the 62 farms in the watershed revealed that the majority of phosphorus flowing into the stream came from 10 farms. CCPI funding through EQIP, just over $600,000, will help test whether farm management changes in targeted high-phosphorus

farms will have a significant impact. Throughout the project, the U.S. Geological Survey will monitor water quality changes in the pilot watershed as well as a control watershed.

Montana: New Farmers Transition to Organic Production. A beginning farmer in Hill County, Montana, purchased 880 acres of prime farmland and is working with the local NRCS field office to develop an aggressive conservation plan that involved converting both traditional cropland and land in the expiring Conservation Reserve Program to organic production. She and her husband place high priority on conservation and stewardship, and want to farm organically and sustainably. With productive soils that are also highly erodible, the conservation plan provides for a 12-year crop rotation, 240-foot wide fields, and 20- to 30-foot filter strips that include pollinator species. Committed to farming without chemicals, she will turn to tillage to control weeds. Only in her second year of farming, she is well on her way to becoming a certified organic producer on the entire operation. She credits the assistance from NRCS and the financial assistance through EQIP as helping her transition to organic production and implementing a sustainable system.

CIG. The CIG project "Impact Targeting: Applying Conservation Tools to the Worst Erosion Areas for Maximum Sediment/Nutrient Reduction" developed a system that identifies high risk erosion areas in the Great Lakes Basin. Erosion from these areas holds the greatest potential to degrade water quality through sedimentation. After identification, these high risk areas can be made priority targets for conservation efforts, allowing the implementation of conservation practices where they are most needed to improve water quality, improving human health and recreational opportunities, lowering costs for municipal water purification and leading to healthier fish and wildlife populations.

AGRICULTURAL WATER ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Current Activities

Background. Section 2510 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (the 2008 Act) (P.L. 110-246) established the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) by amending section 1240I of the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended by the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (P. L. 104-127, April 4, 1996) (the 1996 Act) (16 U.S.C. 3839aa) as amended by Section 2301 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (the 2002 Act) (P. L. 107-171, May 13, 2002) (16 U.S.C. 3839aa). The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) implements AWEP and the associated financial and performance reporting. The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) funds AWEP.

Program Objectives. The purpose of AWEP is to promote improved ground and surface water conservation and water quality by leveraging the Federal government's investment in natural resources conservation with services and resources of other eligible partners. Eligible partners include Federal, State and local entities and local conservation districts whose conservation goals complement and are compatible with NRCS's mission.

The AWEP program was specifically created to address serious surface and ground water shortages as well as water quality concerns in many agricultural areas. The security of the nation's food supply is dependent upon the continued delivery of clean, reliable, irrigation water to farms and ranches. AWEP is one of the few programs which provide assistance directly to producers while helping them stay in business.

AWEP follows the established national priorities for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):

- Conservation of ground and surface water resources;
- Reduction of nonpoint source pollution, such as nutrients, sediment, pesticides, or excess salinity in impaired watersheds consistent with Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) where available;
- Reduction of surface and groundwater contamination;
- Reduction of contamination from agricultural point sources, such as concentrated animal feeding operations; and
- Reduction in soil erosion and sedimentation from unacceptable levels on agricultural land.

Program Operations. As authorized by Congress, eligible partners submit AWEP proposals to NRCS. The proposals are evaluated and successful applicants enter into multi-year agreements with NRCS to promote ground and surface water conservation and improve water quality on eligible agricultural lands in a specific geographic area. This is not a grant program and individual producers are not eligible to submit a partnership proposal.
In evaluating partnership proposals, NRCS gives priority to those that:

- Include high percentages of agricultural land and producers in a region or other appropriate area;
- Result in high levels of applied agricultural water quality and water conservation activities;
- Significantly enhance agricultural activity;
- Allow for monitoring and evaluation;
- Assist agricultural producers in meeting a regulatory requirement that might reduce the economic scope of the producer's operation;
- Are able to achieve the project's land and water treatment objectives within five years or less;
- Include conservation practices that support the conversion of agricultural land from irrigated farming to dryland farming;
- Leverage AWEP funds with funds provided by partners; and
- Assist producers in areas with high-priority water quantity concerns in the following regions: Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer, Puget Sound, Ogallala Aquifer, Sacramento River Watershed, Upper Mississippi River Basin, Red River of the North Basin, or Everglades.

As part of EQIP, AWEP contracts provide technical and financial assistance directly to eligible producers to implement the following:

- Construction or improvement of irrigation systems and increased irrigation efficiency,
- Implementation of conservation practices to improve water quality, and
- Mitigation of the effects of drought by conversion to less water-intense agricultural commodities or to dryland farming.

Eligible program participants may receive a payment amount not to exceed 75 percent of the incurred costs to implement one or more structural, vegetative, or land management practices and up to 100 percent of estimated foregone income. Limited resource farmers, beginning farmers, and land owners or operators that are socially disadvantaged are eligible to receive up to 90 percent of the payment rate.

Total conservation payments are limited to $300,000 per individual or entity during any six-year period regardless of the number of farms or contracts. No individual or entity may receive AWEP payments in any crop year in which the individual's or entity's average adjusted gross income for the preceding three years exceeds $1 million unless two-thirds of that income is from farming, ranching, or forestry interests.

FY 2010 Activities.

This is the second year in which AWEP has been implemented and interest from the agricultural sector has remained steady. In FY 2010, NRCS obligated $60.8 million in 1,489 new contracts to implement conservation practices on nearly 271,000 acres of agricultural land. The ability to leverage funding through partnership agreements has also remained strong. Partners provided approximately $50.5 million in technical and financial assistance in FY 2010, nearly matching NRCS's AWEP investment. Through AWEP, the agency approved 28 new partner project areas during FY 2010, and continued to provide support for 63 existing project areas approved during FY 2009.

FY 2010 Applications

Total number of applications	3,985
Number of valid applications	3,213
Number of applications funded	1,489
Number of valid applications unfunded	1,724

FY 2010 Funding

Financial Assistance Funding from AWEP	$60.8 million
Funding provided by partners	$50.5 million

AWEP funding has been invaluable in helping NRCS address areas in which water demand outstrips water supply. Approximately 54 percent of the projects approved in FY 2010 are located in the designated high-priority water quantity concern areas. Socially disadvantaged producers received 2.8 percent of all contracts under the program. Approximately 52 percent of valid applications were funded during FY 2010.

Fiscal Year 2010 AWEP Program Demands

State	Total Number of Applications	Number of Applications Funded	Number of Valid Applications Unfunded	Valid Applications Funded Percent	Average Contract $	Estimated Unfunded Applications
ALABAMA	67	15	40	29%	$79,656	$4,142,119
ARKANSAS	51	40	1	98	18,859	773,234
CALIFORNIA	1,048	448	412	79	47,154	24,095,603
COLORADO	19	12	2	86	78,441	1,098,179
FLORIDA	189	45	77	38	26,545	3,158,850
GEORGIA	418	123	222	37	11,246	3,733,575
IDAHO	97	28	44	39	117,227	8,440,318
ILLINOIS	12	10	2	82	5,385	59,233
INDIANA	63	27	20	84	42,273	1,352,723
IOWA	12	4	7	36	21,466	236,129
KANSAS	165	108	27	80	40,435	5,458,688
MICHIGAN	100	25	62	39	88,883	5,688,524
MINNESOTA	128	28	92	23	42,792	5,135,025
MISSISSIPPI	348	77	192	31	24,343	6,134,333
MONTANA	10	9	0	100	72,089	648,805
NEBRASKA	516	130	280	33	39,538	15,696,653
NEW JERSEY	13	11	0	100	20,347	223,816
NEW MEXICO	5	5	0	100	19,276	96,381
NEW YORK	20	13	4	76	36,438	619,441
NORTH CAROLINA	11	5	3	100	10,737	53,684
NORTH DAKOTA	152	67	58	57	38,471	4,347,272
OKLAHOMA	61	17	26	37	52,234	2,141,605
OREGON	136	72	39	91	41,855	3,306,573
SOUTH DAKOTA	4	3	0	100	28,601	85,803
TEXAS	293	148	98	51	29,568	5,233,589
WASHINGTON	36	14	12	70	133,761	2,675,224
WYOMING	11	5	4	56	109,011	981,103
Total	**3,985**	**1,489**	**1,724**	**52%**	**$40,842**	**$105,616,482**

Getting Conservation on the Ground.
Colorado: Improving Water Quality through Better Monitoring. NRCS has partnered with the Central Colorado Water Conservancy District (CCWCD) to work with farmers to improve the monitoring of water quality and usage in the region. AWEP funding helps farmers monitor water data through a telemetry system that uses satellites and an Internet-based system to provide real time water usage data. In addition, to promote monitoring efforts, CCWCD also encourages farmers to seek assistance to upgrade irrigation systems in order to improve efficiency and to use water harvesting and storage methods such as recharge ponds and lined gravel pits to provide a reliable and sustainable supply of water.

California: Improving Water Quality through pollution and Prevention measures. In 2008, California waterways in Stanislaus, Merced and San Joaquin counties ranked among the most polluted in the state. Water draining from these rich agricultural areas carried high loads of pesticides, sediments, and nutrients into the San Joaquin River, threatening ecosystems and wildlife downstream. In order to promote these infrastructure improvements, Coalitions for Urban/Rural Environmental Stewardship (CURES) teamed up with local watershed coalitions and ten other partner organizations to apply for funding through the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP). The partner organizations secured $10 million from AWEP for infrastructure improvements. Since then, they have reached out to farmers and encouraged them to apply for funding to mitigate the cost for the innovative pollution-prevention installations on their farms. Through the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program, 22 projects were funded in FY 2009, 23 were approved for FY 2010, and even more will be added in the coming years. Today, waterways that exceeded recommended levels of agricultural inputs in FY 2004 have shown dramatic improvement. These extraordinary water quality improvements were largely a result of direct outreach to farmers. CURES have contacted more than 95 percent of the farmers in the impacted area, instructing them on simple measures to help mend some of the most polluted waterways in the Central Valley.

WILDLIFE HABITAT INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Current Activities
Background. Section 1240N of the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended by 2502 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-171) (16 U.S.C. 3839bb-1), as amended by section 2602 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110 – 246) reauthorized the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) to improve wildlife habitat in our Nation. NRCS administers WHIP.

Program Objectives. WHIP provides assistance to participants for the protection, restoration or enhancement of upland wildlife habitat, wetland wildlife habits, threatened and endangered species, fisheries, and other types of habitat. This effort is accomplished while educating and changing public attitudes toward wildlife habitat management and land stewardship on private agricultural land, nonindustrial private forest land, and Indian land, but the benefits extend far beyond wildlife. Focused efforts on habitat for fish and wildlife also contribute to more sustainable use of resources and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. By prioritizing specific geographic areas, WHIP is able to target financial and technical assistance funds to affect habitats needed for specific declining wildlife species.

WHIP practices are often compatible with, and beneficial to, farming and ranching enterprises. Some practices enhance farm profitability by improving grazing conditions, reducing management expenses, and producing non-crop income from the lease of rights to harvest and observe wild game and fish. WHIP has been used to control invasive species, re-establish native vegetation, manage non-industrial forestland, stabilize stream banks, protect, restore, develop or enhance unique habitats, and remove barriers that impede migration of certain wildlife species.

Program Operations. The national priorities in implementing WHIP are to:
- Promote the restoration of declining or important native fish and wildlife habitats;
- Protect, restore, develop or enhance fish and wildlife habitat of at-risk species;

- Reduce the impacts of invasive species on fish and wildlife habitats; and
- Protect, restore, develop, or enhance declining or important aquatic wildlife species' habitats.

The State Conservationist with recommendations from the State Technical Committee and other partners may identify priorities for enrollment in WHIP that complement the goals and objectives of relevant fish and wildlife conservation initiatives at the national, regional, and State level. The priorities serve as a guide for the development of WHIP ranking criteria in each State. States generally select two to six priority habitat types.

Eligibility. To be eligible for WHIP, the land must be private agricultural land, nonindustrial private forest land, or Tribal land. Applicants must own or control the land and provide evidence that they will be in control of the land for the duration of the cost-share agreement.

Financial Assistance. WHIP provides up to 75 percent cost-share assistance to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat through agreements that last from one to ten years. Higher payments may be made to eligible socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers in addition to beginning and limited resource farmers or ranchers and Indian Tribes. WHIP provides additional financial assistance to landowners who enter into 15-year or longer agreements to protect and restore high value, essential plant and animal habitat. Aggregate WHIP payments to any participant may not exceed $50,000 per year.

Technical Assistance. NRCS and its partners provide program participants with an assessment of wildlife habitat conditions, recommendations for practices to improve these habitat conditions, and a plan that incorporates practices and strategies for maximizing habitat for target species.

Partnerships. Partners play a significant role in WHIP implementation. In addition to providing technical assistance, they contribute cost-share support, supply equipment, and install practices. Partners include public agencies, non-profit organization partners, and technical service providers. Their participation in WHIP has improved communication and coordination among various interests addressing wildlife concerns.

FY 2010 Activities.

In FY 2010, NRCS obligated almost $63 million in more than 4,700 agreements to enroll over one million acres in WHIP. Sixty-eight of these contracts valued at over $3.7 million are with American Indian and Alaskan Natives. Since the program began in 1998, national enrollment is almost 37,000 agreements on over 6.5 million acres. At the end of FY 2010, an additional 11,500 valid applications valued at almost $44 million, remain unfunded, demonstrating the strong producer interest in the program. In FY 2010, 11 percent of the acres enrolled benefited threatened and endangered species and addressed the following five major habitat types and declining species:

- Upland wildlife habitat (including grasslands, shrub/scrub, and forests)
- Wetland wildlife habitat
- Riparian habitat (including areas along streams, rivers, lakes, and sloughs and coastal areas)
- Shallow water habitat (including lands where water can be impounded or regulated by diking, excavating, ditching, and/or flooding). The goal is to provide habitat for wildlife such as shorebirds, waterfowl, wading birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, amphibians, and other species that require shallow water for at least a part of their life cycle.
- Rare and declining habitat (areas that once supported or currently support a unique, dwindling, or imperiled native plant and animal community).

Initiatives. WHIP plays an important role in implementing a number of NRCS special initiatives.

- Longleaf Pine Initiative. During FY 2010, NRCS enrolled over 33,000 acres of longleaf pine forest in almost 400 contracts valued at nearly $4.65 million. WHIP funding improved the health and extent of the longleaf pine forest ecosystem in ways that benefited both the health of the plant community and wildlife habitat in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia.
- Lesser Prairie Chicken Initiative. During FY 2010, NRCS enrolled over 98,000 acres in these States in 138 WHIP contracts valued at more than $3.8 million. WHIP enrolled land in Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico,

Oklahoma, and Texas in order to help limit the need to list the Lesser Prairie Chicken as threatened and endangered under the Endangered Species Act, while also improving grazing and wildlife habitat.

- New England-New York Forestry Initiative. WHIP expanded stewardship opportunities for forest lands and wildlife in the New England States of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. During FY 2010, NRCS enrolled over 48,500 acres in these States in more than 300 WHIP contracts valued at more than $4.6 million.
- Sage Grouse Initiative. During FY 2010, NRCS enrolled almost 90,000 acres in these States in 37 WHIP contracts valued at more than $3.8 million. In FY 2010, the removal of an estimated 180 miles of fence has prevented between 800-1,000 Sage Grouse collisions. WHIP implemented conservation practices in 11 States (California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming) that will reduce threats to Sage Grouse habitat. These practices are designed both to help limit the need to list the Sage Grouse as threatened and endangered and to provide grazing land for ranches.
- Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative. During 2010, NRCS responded to the threat posed to migrating species by the deep water horizon oil spill Gulf of Mexico in eight States (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Texas) with the goal of providing diverse habitat in mid to late 2010 for feeding, loafing, and resting to attract and hold migratory birds. NRCS enrolled over 200,000 acres in these States in 865 WHIP contracts valued at more than $9.8 million.

Getting Conservation on the Ground.

Maine: Restored land provides habitat and recreational benefits. Owen's Marsh in Somerset County is a wildlife and nature preserve that the landowner makes available to veterans and first responders with disabilities. After a dam breached in late 2000, the landowner committed to reclaiming the land and building it into a center at which injured veterans and first responders could recover through nature therapy. Working with WHIP, other government agencies, and nine partner organizations, the landowner is building a significant wildlife and nature center. WHIP conservation practices such as improving forest stand, planting cover crops, installing bird nesting boxes, and successional mowing are creating open space habitat that provides roosting, resting, feeding and rearing habitat for the for the American woodcock, a species of concern, and over 50 other wildlife species. This effort is part of the New England/New York Forestry Initiative.

California: WHIP practices support pollinators, provide educational opportunity. An organic orchard farm producing a variety of fruit has installed a number of practices to benefit pollinators, primarily native bees but also to help support healthy colonies of bees kept onsite. NRCS worked with the landowner to provide technical assistance and improved habitat conservation practices. These conservation practices include planting an extensive amount of hedgerows, planting cover crops as insectary orchard floor cover, and installing bee blocks to provide permanent homes for cavity nesting bee species. This certified organic farm located in a dense agricultural region offers opportunity for students, researchers, and most importantly, other farmers to observe conservation practices beneficial to pollinators.

Colorado: Conservation practices support rotational grazing and improve Sage Grouse habitat. A rancher concerned about overusing riparian areas and under using adjacent uplands installed cross-fencing to create a riparian area. Providing new grazing opportunity has enabled the use of a rotational grazing system. The riparian areas provide forb cover and insects for foraging Sage Grouse, a candidate species for listing under the Endangered Species Act. Watering facilities for livestock were installed throughout the underutilized upland areas. All fences installed on the property are wildlife friendly and are marked to avoid bird/fence collisions. The project both improves habitat for Sage Grouse and makes this working ranch more sustainable.

FARM AND RANCH LANDS PROTECTION PROGRAM

Current Activities

Background. Title III of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 established the Farmland Protection Program (FPP) as a new farmland protection program. The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (the 2002 Act) authorized FPP as a Title XII program under the Food Security Act of 1985, authorizing the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to purchase conservation easements for the purpose of protecting topsoil by limiting nonagricultural uses of the land. NRCS identified the program as the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) in the 2003 Final Rule to distinguish it from the 1996 authorization and to reflect more accurately the types of land the program protects. The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (the 2008 Act) amended the 2002 Act by changing the purpose of the program to provide funding for the purchase of conservation easements by eligible entities.

Program Objectives. The Farmland Protection Program protects the Nation's most valuable lands used for the production of food, feed, and fiber by providing matching funds to keep productive farm and ranch lands in agricultural uses. According to NRCS National Resources Inventory (NRI) data, over 7.5 million acres of prime farmland, an area equivalent to the states of Maryland and Delaware, were converted to nonagricultural uses between 2002 and 2007. The same study tells us that more than one-third of all land that has ever been developed in the lower 48 states during our Nation's history was developed during the last quarter century. Such conversion decreases the availability of local food markets and increases the travel distance and cost of food to the consumer market. By enrolling in FRPP, farm and ranch lands threatened by development pressures can remain productive and sustainable. Keeping land in agricultural use reduces the amount of urban pollution (nitrogen, phosphorus and sedimentation) from land that would otherwise be converted to lawns and impervious surfaces. Ultimately this assists with efforts in managing Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) of nutrients to public waters such as the Chesapeake Bay and Mississippi River. Additionally, FRPP supports the President's *America's Great Outdoors* initiative by preserving the natural landscape features of non-urbanized areas and encouraging the continued agricultural uses of the lands.

Program Operations. Working through existing farmland protection programs, NRCS partners with State and local governments, soil and water conservation districts, Tribes, and eligible nongovernmental organizations to purchase conservation easements. Potential partners must provide written evidence of their:

- Commitment to long-term conservation of agricultural lands through the use of legal instruments (i.e., right-to-farm laws, agricultural districts, zoning, or land use plans);
- Use of voluntary approaches to protect farmland from conversion to nonagricultural uses;
- Capability to acquire, manage, and enforce easement rights or other interests in land; and
- Capability to provide a minimum 25 percent in cash of the purchase price (appraised fair market value minus the landowner donation) of the conservation easement.

Eligibility. Individual landowners must apply to and be accepted by the eligible State, Tribe, or local governments or nongovernmental programs to participate in FRPP. As a Title XII program, these individual landowners must meet Farm Bill payment eligibility requirements for adjusted gross income, wetland conservation, and highly erodible land conservation. The land to be enrolled in FRPP must meet one of three criteria to qualify for consideration: 1) have at least 50 percent prime, unique, or important farmland soil; 2) have historic or archeological resources; or 3) support the policies of a State or local farm and ranch lands protection program.

Application and Selection Process. NRCS uses a continuous signup for cooperating entities to submit parcels proposed for funding. Upon receipt of the applications for parcels from an eligible cooperating entity, each NRCS State office evaluates the entities, land, and landowners for eligibility, and ranks and prioritizes parcels based on established criteria. NRCS awards funds to the eligible cooperating entities that submitted the highest ranked parcels for which the NRCS State office has FRPP funding. Farms that are accessible to markets for what the land produces, have adequate infrastructure and agricultural support services, have surrounding parcels of land that can support long-term agricultural production, and are faced with development pressures typically rank the highest for FRPP.

NRCS and the cooperating entities sign a cooperative agreement to obligate FRPP funds. The cooperating entities process the easement acquisition, and also hold, manage, and enforce the acquired easements. The Federal share for any easement acquisition cannot exceed 50 percent of the appraised fair market value of the conservation easement. Each conservation easement deed must include a provision providing the United States with the right of enforcement to protect the Federal investment. To ensure responsible land stewardship, the landowner must implement a conservation plan protecting highly erodible land on each parcel acquired in part with Federal funds. NRCS provides technical assistance to develop conservation plans for acres accepted into FRPP.

NRCS Technical Assistance. In addition to helping landowners develop conservation plans, NRCS provides technical assistance to the cooperating entities through verification of the eligibility of the entity, landowner, and land; assessment of the risk of hazardous materials; evaluating and ranking applications; development of cooperative agreements; review of deeds, title, and appraisals; and processing of payments. NRCS monitors the conservation easement deeds.

FY 2010 Activities.
In FY 2010, over 170, 000 acres were enrolled in FRPP in 35 States. NRCS closed on 275 easements enrolled from prior years encompassing 68,203 acres, and disbursed more than $86,421,000 of prior year FRPP obligations. The average size easement enrolled in FY 2010 was 423 acres.

FRPP contributed to the Administration's strategy for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed by protecting agricultural lands and thus limiting creation of impervious surfaces. In FY 2010, NRCS enrolled an estimated 21 parcels, encompassing 3,434 acres in Chesapeake Bay states.

FRPP also supported the Sage Grouse Initiative by preserving grassland habitat needed by the species.

Cumulative Summary 1996 - 2010. Forty-nine States received over $799.4 million in financial assistance to purchase easements on 2,723 farms and ranches. It is estimated that 521,224 acres of prime, unique, and important farmland have been or will be permanently protected from conversion to nonagricultural uses as a result of these easements. NRCS has enrolled a total of 809,098 acres on 3,495 farms, with an estimated cumulative easement value of nearly $2.24 billion. NRCS and the cooperating entities acquire all easements for perpetuity.

The demand for the program has exceeded available funds by approximately 200 percent. For every Federal dollar invested through FRPP, an additional $1.88 has been contributed by the participating cooperating entities and landowners.

Getting Conservation on the Ground.
Wyoming: Extensive Tract of Private Land Protected through Partnership. A massive land-protection agreement conserving nearly 19,000 acres of historic agricultural land, critical wildlife habitat and iconic views in Sublette County was finalized in June 2010. The Sommers-Grindstone Conservation Project is one of the most extensive private lands conservation efforts in Wyoming's history and includes four separate conservation easements and public fishing access on nearly five miles of the Green River.

The landmark agreements of the Sommers-Grindstone project is a partnership among the landowners, the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission, the Wyoming Stock Growers Agricultural Land Trust, and an extensive list of public and private funders, including NRCS. This easement will allow the land to remain undeveloped, which is a benefit to cattle and wildlife, and it will allow the landowners to pass the ranch along to another generation of ranchers. The cattle ranches are comprised of hay meadows, riparian areas, a diverse population of tree stands, upland areas, sagebrush and high-prairie-grass areas, and wetlands. The agricultural land provides important habitat and vital migration corridors for deer, antelope, elk and moose. The riparian areas are home to nesting song birds, raptors, waterfowl, shorebirds, sandhill cranes and blue herons. Additionally, the ranches and surrounding areas host Sage Grouse leks and protective habitat for the species.

The conservation easements are held by the Wyoming Stock Growers Agricultural Land Trust and the ranches remain under the ownership and management of the landowners. The Wyoming Game and Fish

Commission hold the public fishing access easements. The land will be managed by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department along with the landowners.

New Jersey: Carpenter and Sparks Farms. The 180-acre Carpenter Farm and the 142-acre Sparks Farm in Salem County were protected from development with funding from the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC), Garden State Preservation Trust, and FRPP.

The Carpenter Farm was purchased over 300 years ago. Mr. Preston farms his family's multi-generational land, growing a range of rotated crops including vegetables, wheat, and soybeans. Three-quarters of a mile away is the Sparks Farm, which is owned by Mildred Sparks. Wheat and soybeans are the primary crops cultivated on the Sparks Farm.

In addition to protecting rich, fertile farmland and investing in the agricultural economy of the region, preserving these lands also provides a significant environmental benefit. The Carpenter and Sparks Farms border the 18,593-acre area known as Mannington Meadows. Originally, Dutch settlers constructed dikes around Mannington Meadows to farm salt hay and wild rice. A hurricane in the 1920s destroyed most of the impoundments which were subsequently rebuilt. The resulting land and waterscape is one of the top areas in the state for waterfowl diversity and has been designated an Important Bird Area by New Jersey Audubon. Mannington Meadows provides critical habitat for breeding populations of imperiled species such as: bald eagle, pied-billed grebe, king rail, Caspian tern, sora and clapper rail.

CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM

Current Activities

Background. The Conservation Security Program (CSP) was authorized by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002. Title II, Subtitle a, Section 2001 amends the Food Security Act of 1985 by adding Chapter 2, Subchapter A, the Conservation Security Program. Section 1202(a) of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 extended CSP into 2011. The program was not reauthorized by Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-246), which stipulated that a conservation security program contract may not be entered into or renewed after September 30, 2008. The Secretary shall make payments on contracts entered before September 30, 2008 using such sums as are necessary. Section 2301 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Act) states the guidance for the termination of the Conservation Security authority and the effect on existing contracts. Section 1238A of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3838a) was amended by adding the following new subsection "(g) prohibition on Conservation Security Program Contracts (1) Prohibition- A conservation security contract may not be entered into a renewed under this subchapter after September 30, 2008. (2) Exception-This subchapter, terms and conditions of the Conservation Security Program shall continue to apply to conservation security contracts entered into on or before September 30, 2008 and any conservation security contract for which the application for the contract was received during the 2008 sign up period. (3) The Secretary shall make payments under this subchapter with respect to the conservation security contracts during the remaining terms of the contracts.

Program Objectives. The Conservation Security Program was a voluntary program that provided financial and technical assistance for the conservation, protection, and improvement of natural resources on tribal and private working lands. It provided payments for producers who practice good stewardship on their agricultural lands and provided incentives for those who wanted to do more. The program purpose was to:

- Identify and reward those farmers and ranchers meeting the very highest standards of conservation and environmental management on their operations,
- Create powerful incentives for other producers to meet those same standards of conservation performance on their operations, and
- Provide public benefits for generations to come.

Under the 2008 Farm Bill, NRCS is not authorized to enter into new Conservation Security Program contracts but continues to make payments to producers with five- to ten-year contracts from prior years.

Program Operations. NRCS used a watershed approach to deliver the Conservation Security Program. The agency prioritized watersheds based upon a nationally consistent process that used existing natural resource, environmental quality, and agricultural activity data along with other information necessary to efficiently operate the program. Signups to participate in the program were rotated among watersheds on an annual basis. The program emphasized water quality and soil quality as nationally significant resource concerns because of the potential for significant environmental benefits from conservation treatment that improves their condition.

Eligibility. The program provided financial and technical assistance to participants committed to advancing the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes on Tribal and private working lands. Eligible lands included cropland, grassland, prairie land, improved pasture, and rangeland, as well as forested land and other non-cropped areas that are an incidental part of an agricultural operation. Equitable access was provided to producers regardless of size of operation, crops produced, or geographic location.

Financial and Technical Assistance. Financial assistance payments under the program had four components:

- An annual stewardship component for the base level of conservation treatment,
- An annual existing-practice component for the maintenance of existing conservation practices,
- An enhancement component for exceptional conservation effort and additional activities that provide increased resource benefits beyond the prescribed level, and
- A one-time new-practice component for additional needed practices.

Technical assistance was provided to participants through either NRCS or an approved technical service provider. It included help to finalize applications after NRCS had determined producers met minimum requirements, to document conservation stewardship plans, and to apply conservation treatment.

Application and Selection Process. The Conservation Security Program was offered in 331 watersheds in all 50 states, District of Columbia, and the Pacific and Caribbean areas during the 2002 Farm Bill. Applicants had to meet certain conservation standards, including the minimum tier eligibility and the minimum level of treatment along with other applicant and land eligibility requirements. NRCS determined at the National level the number of categories that could be funded in accordance with the signup notice and available funds. Enrollment categories and subcategories were funded in priority order until the available funds were exhausted.

FY 2010 Activities.

In FY 2010, NRCS provided $199,927,828 in financial assistance payments on 15,615 contracts from signups in 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2008. Among the many benefits of this program, CSP has been a significant contributor within the emerging areas of carbon and energy management. NRCS provides payments for enhancement activities to promote carbon sequestration, energy conservation, and the production and use of renewable fuels and electricity. Funded activities include:

- Sequestration of greenhouse gases as measured by improvements to the soil conditioning index, which reflects soil organic matter levels;
- Generation of renewable energy;
- Use of renewable energy fuels such as biodiesel and ethanol;
- Recycling of on-farm lubricants; and
- Reductions in soil tillage intensity ratings.

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Current Activities

Background. Section 2301 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Act) (P.L 110-246) amended the Food Security Act of 1985 to establish the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

Program Objectives. The Conservation Stewardship Program encourages agricultural and forestry producers to maintain existing conservation activities and to adopt additional ones on their operations. CSP provides opportunities to both recognize excellent stewards and deliver valuable new conservation. The program helps producers identify natural resource problems in their operation and provides technical and financial assistance to solve those problems in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner.

CSP addresses the following resource concerns:

- Soil erosion: reducing the amount of soil lost through wind, sheet, and rill erosion from cropland, stream banks, and farm roads;
- Soil quality: increasing soil organic matter, reducing compaction, reducing organic matter oxidation, removing soil contaminants, and utilizing nutrient cycling;
- Water quantity: mitigating the impact of excess water, improving water usage through irrigation efficiency, and selecting crops based on available moisture;
- Water quality: reducing the negative impact of transported sediments, nutrients, pesticides, salinity, and pathogens on surface and subsurface water sources;
- Air quality: reducing the contribution of agricultural operations to airborne soil particles and greenhouse gas emissions, controlling chemical spray drift, and reducing odors from livestock operations;
- Plant resources: improving the quantity, diversity, health, and vigor of plants while creating conditions for recognized threatened and endangered species to reestablish;
- Animal resources: improving the cover, food, and water available for domestic and wildlife species and improving habitat for aquatic and recognized threatened and endangered species; and
- Energy: promoting energy efficiencies for on-farm activities.

Given the program's focus on these resource concerns, investment in CSP promotes deeper, improved soils leading to higher crop yields, and reduced contamination of water sources from fertilizers, manure, pesticides and sediment, leading to better human health, more recreational opportunities, lower costs for municipal water purification systems and healthier fish and wildlife populations.

Program Operations. CSP is a voluntary program available through a continuous sign-up process, with announced cut-off dates for ranking and funding applications. This allows producers to submit their applications at any time. Applications are evaluated relative to other applications addressing similar priority resource concerns to facilitate a competitive ranking process among applications that face similar resource challenges. The 2008 Farm Bill prescribed the following factors for evaluating and ranking applications:

- Level of conservation treatment on all applicable priority resource concerns at the time of application;
- Degree to which the proposed conservation treatment on applicable priority resource concerns effectively increases conservation performance;
- Number of applicable priority resource concerns proposed to be treated to meet or exceed the stewardship threshold by the end of the contract; and
- Extent to which other resource concerns, in addition to priority resource concerns, will be addressed to meet or exceed the stewardship threshold by the end of the contract period.

Congress authorized the enrollment of a maximum of 12,769,000 acres per fiscal year beginning October 1, 2008, and ending on September 30, 2017. Continuous sign-up for CSP started on August 10, 2009. Although the program is national in scope, NRCS did not establish national priority resource concerns. Instead States determine the three to five priority resource concerns that are of specific concern for their State or for geographic areas within the State. NRCS did, however, establish national technical focus areas for on-farm research and demonstration (R&D) or pilot

projects to promote new technology and research in areas of importance to the agency, including pollinators, water quality, and energy.

Eligibility. Eligibility to participate in CSP has three components—applicant, land, and stewardship threshold eligibility. CSP is available to all producers, regardless of operation size or crops produced, in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the Caribbean and Pacific Island areas. Individuals, legal entities, joint operations, or Native American Tribes may apply. To be accepted, the applicant must have effective control of the land and be the operator of record in the Farm Service Agency. Eligible lands include cropland, pastureland, rangeland and non-industrial private forestland, agricultural land under the jurisdiction of a Native American Tribe, and other private agricultural land (including cropped woodland, marshes, and agricultural land used for the production of livestock) on which resource concerns related to agricultural production could be addressed.

Once applicant and land eligibility are determined, NRCS uses the conservation measurement tool (CMT) to assess an applicant's conservation activities. These activities must meet or exceed the stewardship threshold, as determined by CMT, for at least one resource concern at the time of the application and one priority resource concern by the end of the CSP contract.

Financial Assistance. CSP provides participants with two possible types of payments. An annual payment is available for installing new conservation activities and maintaining existing activities. A supplemental payment may be earned by participants receiving an annual payment who also adopt a resource-conserving crop rotation. Through 5-year contracts, payments are made as soon as practical after October of each year for contract activities installed and maintained in the previous fiscal year. For all contracts, CSP payments to a person or legal entity may not exceed $40,000 in any year and $200,000 during any 5-year period. Each CSP contract is limited to $200,000 over the term of the initial contract period with the exception of joint operations, which may qualify for up to $400,000 over the term of the initial contract period.

Technical Assistance and Partnership. CSP offers technical assistance to producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner. Through the planning process, NRCS assists producers and forestry land owners to identify natural resource problems in their operation and provide technical and financial assistance to solve those problems in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner.

Partnership efforts have been forged with Federal, State, and local entities, including the National Association of Conservation Districts, State Associations of Conservation Districts, and local conservation districts to deliver a program beneficial to program participants and the environment. NRCS cooperates with Federal, State, and local partners to address local and national conservation issues. Through interactive communication between the local community, local interest groups, and State and Federal agencies, the partnership provides the entities with information and resources needed to address local priorities and implement State and national programs, such as CSP.

Under the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI), NRCS enters into partnership agreements with eligible entities that want to enhance conservation outcomes on agricultural and nonindustrial private forest lands in an effort to leverage funds to get more conservation benefit. The partners do not receive any funds from NRCS. All financial assistance is provided directly to producers for implementation of activities in CSP contracts. Partners agree to provide additional technical or administrative resources to assist with planning, implementation, and/or monitoring of project effectiveness. Eligible partners include Federally recognized Native American Tribes, State and local units of government, producer associations, farmer cooperatives, institutions of higher education, and nongovernmental organizations with a history of working cooperatively with producers.

FY 2010 Activities.

In FY 2010, CSP supported conservation by obligating more than $320 million in financial assistance funding, as shown in the State distribution table below. These funds will be used to treat 25,164,328 acres leading to higher crop yields, improved water quality and energy efficiency. These are among the many benefits of addressing the natural resource concerns of agricultural and forestry producers.

State	No. of Contracts	Financial Assistance Obligated	Acres Treated
ALABAMA	431	$4,087,316	348,905
ALASKA	14	1,329,565	182,565
ARIZONA	56	4,003,337	821,643
ARKANSAS	620	11,185,938	569,519
CALIFORNIA	337	5,975,203	721,128
COLORADO	469	11,746,128	1,264,376
CONNECTICUT	13	52,907	8,467
DELAWARE	25	349,904	14,448
FLORIDA	95	1,216,126	65,279
GEORGIA	584	10,245,599	354,906
HAWAII	16	105,873	7,098
IDAHO	202	4,143,039	351,087
ILLINOIS	542	8,696,724	402,697
INDIANA	308	5,212,795	211,565
IOWA	1,480	20,255,574	797,605
KANSAS	872	18,000,610	1,216,415
KENTUCKY	182	928,525	62,111
LOUISIANA	321	5,554,729	264,940
MAINE	102	528,394	70,381
MARYLAND	65	741,914	24,249
MASSACHUSETTS	11	58,135	7,324
MICHIGAN	544	4,678,331	229,963
MINNESOTA	1,575	21,377,320	915,761
MISSISSIPPI	319	8,980,074	352,265
MISSOURI	1,939	16,557,469	976,001
MONTANA	486	15,066,536	1,810,055
NEBRASKA	1,106	20,152,534	1,836,928
NEVADA	17	300,124	23,829
NEW HAMPSHIRE	17	46,650	3,430
NEW JERSEY	9	71,225	2,468
NEW MEXICO	172	5,412,752	1,478,740
NEW YORK	321	3,287,632	159,602
NORTH CAROLINA	167	1,054,090	67,414
NORTH DAKOTA	627	19,486,721	1,280,729
OHIO	324	3,013,683	127,833
OKLAHOMA	918	16,175,899	1,137,871
OREGON	372	7,551,677	841,378
PENNSYLVANIA	565	3,974,217	166,101
RHODE ISLAND	21	46,311	3,725
SOUTH CAROLINA	443	3,423,141	265,706
SOUTH DAKOTA	505	14,873,702	1,294,391
TENNESSEE	416	2,127,807	139,168
TEXAS	989	15,185,771	2,037,864
UTAH	78	1,738,582	301,187
VERMONT	7	35,471	2,562
VIRGINIA	270	3,313,041	146,844
WASHINGTON	206	6,008,341	448,327
WEST VIRGINIA	253	780,412	73,445

State	No. of Contracts	Financial Assistance Obligated	Acres Treated
WISCONSIN	968	$6,650,195	359,990
WYOMING	177	4,590,762	913,343
PUERTO RICO	11	19,066	700
Total	20,567	320,397,871	25,164,328

Getting Conservation on the Ground.
Louisiana: Committed Stewards Add Conservation Practices, Educate Area Landowners. A farm couple in East Carroll Parish are long-time proponents of no-till farming. As a result of their work to educate other landowners, including hosting many demonstration field days on their farm, more than 15 percent of the farmers in the parish have adopted no-till or reduced-till farming. The couple adopted other conservation practices to bring soil loss to tolerant levels, including installation of weir plate inlets and drop inlets at strategic locations and installation of riparian buffers. These practices keep nutrients in the fields and out of local water bodies. Through the CSP, they were able to add drift-reducing nozzles to their irrigation system, which both use less water to irrigate crops and distribute the water to crops more efficiently, thereby increasing production and reducing runoff. This is an excellent example of how CSP works—it makes direct per acre payments to producers and other landowners who practice good stewardship based on how well they are managing their natural resources and offers opportunity to install or adopt additional conservation practices, providing benefits to the producer, the environment, and the community. Using less water means less impact to the local aquifer, increased crop production means an economic boost for East Carroll Parish, and reduced water runoff means that silt and nutrients are less likely to enter into the streams and water bodies in East Carroll Parish.

GRASSLAND RESERVE PROGRAM

Current Activities
Background. The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) was authorized by Sections 1238 N through Q of the Food Security Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-198) as amended by Section 2401 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-171). Section 2403 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110–246) reauthorized GRP and made several amendments, including authorizing the enrollment of an additional 1.22 million acres of eligible land from FY 2009 through FY 2012.

Program Objectives. GRP helps landowners and operators restore and protect rangeland, pastureland, and other grassland while maintaining the land's suitability for grazing. Participants voluntarily limit future development and cropping uses of the land while retaining the right to conduct common grazing practices and operations related to the production of forage and seeding. Limiting development and providing habitat desperately needed by threatened and endangered species preserves agricultural heritage and green space, provides for recreational activities and ensures the Nation's ability to produce its own food.

Program Operations. NRCS and the Farm Service Agency (FSA) jointly administer GRP. NRCS has lead responsibility on conservation planning, technical assistance to owners and operators, and easement administration. FSA has lead responsibility for rental contract administration and financial activities. National ranking criteria guide the development of State ranking criteria to ensure GRP funds are focused on projects that support grazing operations, protect grassland from conversion to other uses, enhance plant and animal biodiversity, leverage non-Federal funds and address that State's program priorities. Priority is given to expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) grasslands. Applications, ranking criteria, and program forms are publicly available through agency Web site http://www.nrcs.usda.gov.

GRP participants are required to follow a grazing management plan developed with NRCS to ensure that the grassland is sustained and that livestock grazing on the enrolled land are healthy and well managed. All enrollment options permit grazing on the land in a manner that maintains the viability of natural grasses, shrubs, and forbs. Haying, mowing, or harvesting seed is permitted except during the nesting seasons for local bird species that are in

significant decline or are protected under Federal or State law.

Eligibility. Land is eligible if it is privately owned or Tribal land and is 1) grassland that contains forbs or shrubs (including rangeland and pastureland) for which grazing is the predominant use or 2) located in an area that has been historically dominated by grassland, forbs, or shrubs. The land must also have potential to provide habitat for animal or plant populations of significant ecological value if it is either retained in its current use or restored to a natural condition.

Financial Assistance. The program operates under a continuous signup process with the following enrollment options:

- Rental contract. Participants may choose a 10-year, 15-year, or 20-year contract, during which USDA provides annual payments in an amount not more than 75 percent of the grazing value established by the Farm Service Agency. County-based grazing values (determined on soil productivity) are posted in USDA field offices. Payment rates are evaluated to assure that the rates reflect local prevailing rental rates. Payment is limited to $50,000 per person or legal entity per year.
- Permanent easement. Easement duration is in perpetuity or to the maximum extent allowed by State law. Participants are provided an easement payment after the easement is filed. Easement payment amounts may not exceed the current market value of the land less the grazing value of the land encumbered by the easement. Easement compensation is determined as the lowest of: 1) an appraisal or area-wide market survey, 2) a geographic cap, or 3) landowner offer.
- Restoration agreement. If NRCS and the landowner determine that restoration is necessary to return the vegetation to a desired condition, cost-share assistance is available through a restoration agreement that pays up to 50 percent of the restoration cost, up to $50,000 per person or legal entity per year. Participants may pay part of their share through in-kind contributions. If funds are limited, USDA gives higher priority to applications with high-quality grassland needing protection but no restoration than to poorer-quality grassland that also needs restoration.
- Cooperative agreement. The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) authorizes USDA to enter into cooperative agreements with a unit of State or local government, Tribe, or land trust that demonstrates it has the relevant experience and resources to administer a GRP easement. The Federal Government will pay up to 50 percent of the purchase price of the easement. The cooperating entity has the responsibility to enforce the easement, but the United States maintains a contingent right of enforcement.

Technical Assistance. The participant develops a grazing management or conservation plan with NRCS, including grazing practices for the acres determined eligible for GRP. The grazing management or conservation plan specifies the manner in which the grasslands should be managed to maintain their viability. NRCS technical assistance includes reviews of restoration measures, guidance on management activities, and biological advice to achieve optimum results considering all grassland resources.

FY 2010 Activities.

The 2008 Farm Bill authorizes GRP to enroll 1,220,000 acres of eligible land during FY 2009 through FY 2012. During FY 2010, the program obligated and committed $90.3 million of the financial assistance funding allocated to the States and enrolled 335,332 acres. Of the funding provided, approximately 60 percent enrolled GRP easements and 40 percent enrolled rental contracts.

	Easements	Rental Contracts	Total
Easement Applications	386	--	386
Approved Participants	140	424	564
No. of Acres Enrolled	61,813	273,519	335,332
Funding	53,083,220	37,227,000	90,310,220

GRP Accomplishments	FY 2003 to FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010
Number of participants enrolled	2,812	389	564
Rental acres enrolled	618,103	89,580	273,519
Permanent protection of native grassland, rangeland, and shrubland through GRP conservation easements (acres)	107,249	56,689	61,813
Total Acres enrolled	725,352	146,269	335,332
Cumulative Acres enrolled 2008 Farm Bill	--	146,269	481,601

Getting Conservation on the Ground.
Montana: GRP Enrollments Support Agency Commitment to Sage Grouse Habitat**.** In Phillips County, Montana, five GRP projects enrolled in the last two years protect 29,485 acres. These projects help preserve rural ranching operations while providing critical wildlife habitat for Sage Grouse and other grassland birds. The US Fish and Wildlife Service announced this species as a candidate for listing on the Endangered Species List. NRCS is taking proactive steps to protect and improve habitat in order to prevent listing of this bird in significant decline. More than 80 percent of the acres in these five ranches are prime habitat for of Sage Grouse. These ranchers have embraced management activities that continue to provide food, clean water, and habitat for mule deer, elk, pronghorn, and a multitude of neo-tropical grassland birds and one of the healthiest populations of Sage Grouse in the nation.

Pennsylvania: GRP Helps Landowners Manage for Conservation. Conservation-minded landowners are interested in protecting and improving pastures for grazing management, while maintaining wildlife habitat for ground nesting birds. These landowners saw the GRP program as a good fit for their management goals and did not want to sell their cattle farm for development. These conservation easements protected nearly 400 acres of grasslands in areas subject to increasing development pressure.

AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Current Activities
Background. Section 524(b), Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA), authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to use $15 million of Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) funds for cost-share assistance in 16 States where participation in the Federal Crop Insurance Program is historically low. Section 524(b) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act, 7 U.S.C. 1524(b), was added by Title I, Section 133, of the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000 (PL 106-224, June 22, 2000). Section 133 (P.L. 106-224. Section 524(b), was further amended by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, (Farm Bill), P.L. 107-171, May 13, 2002. This amendment identified the following 16 States that are eligible for AMA: Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming. Section 133 (P.L. 106-224, Section 524(b), was further amended by the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (P.L. 110 – 246) and this amendment added Hawaii as the 16th State eligible for participation in AMA. The 2008 Farm Bill amendment also specifies the amount of fiscal year funds to be apportioned to NRCS, the Risk Management Agency (RMA), and the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).

Program Objectives. NRCS administers the conservation provisions of the AMA program, which provides financial assistance to agricultural producers to address water management, water quality, and erosion control issues by incorporating conservation into their farming operations. With AMA funds, producers may construct or improve water management structures or irrigation structures; plant trees for windbreaks or to improve water quality; and mitigate risk through production diversification or resource conservation practices, including soil erosion control, integrated pest management, or transition to organic farming.

Program Operations. The AMA program addresses the following NRCS national priorities:
- Reductions of non-point source pollution, such as nutrients, sediment, pesticides, or excess salinity in impaired watersheds consistent with total daily maximum loads, where available;

- Reduction of surface and groundwater contamination;
- Promotion of conservation of ground and surface water resources;
- Reduction of emissions, such as particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, and ozone precursors and depleters that contribute to air quality impairment violations of National Ambient Air Quality Standards;
- Reduction in soil erosion and sedimentation from unacceptably high levels on agricultural land; and
- Promotion of at-risk species habitat conservation.

Like other cost-share programs, AMA implementation is based on a conservation plan, from which a contract is developed. AMA contracts contain highly effective conservation practices that help mitigate the negative effects of resource concerns on the landscape and to the environment. The practices most frequently included in conservation plans and contracts include:

- Irrigation Pipelines: used to convey irrigation water in an efficient and effective manner;
- Micro Irrigation Systems: systems which have the highest irrigation efficiency and which can reduce water usage significantly;
- Sprinkler Irrigation Systems: the most widely used type of irrigation water delivery system which is both effective and efficient;
- Irrigation Storage Reservoirs: used to store irrigation water for re-use;
  Pumping Plants: installed in conjunction with other irrigation system components to assist in water use or reuse;
- Water wells: a means by which to effectively utilize groundwater, often in conjunction with sprinkler and micro-irrigation systems;
- Fencing: installed to assist in the management of livestock grazing and a vital component of any grazing management system;
- Brush Management: used to control invasive species and increase land productivity; and
- Seasonal High Tunnel System for Crops: temporary structures which control the growing environment and improve the efficiency of water use.

NRCS developed the conservation provisions to make program implementation flexible enough to allow States the opportunity to use it to meet their resource needs. States individually determine the resource concerns to be addressed, eligible practices, applicant ranking criteria, the ranking process, and cutoff dates for ranking applications. States are responsible for fund allocations within the State, payment methods, and public outreach and information activities. Participants may use AMA in conjunction with other USDA conservation programs.

Eligibility. Applicants must own or control the land within an identified AMA State and comply with adjusted gross income limitation provisions. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, grassland, pastureland, non-industrial forestland, and other private land that produces crops or livestock where risk may be mitigated through operation diversification or change in resource conservation practices.

Financial Assistance. AMA provides cost-share assistance to eligible participants. Participation is voluntary but requires a conservation plan. NRCS works with the applicant to develop the plan. A contract must be for a minimum duration of one year after completion of the last practice, but not more than ten years. Participants must agree to maintain cost-shared practices for the life of the practice. They may contribute to the cost of a practice through in-kind contributions, which may include personal labor, use of personal equipment, donated labor or materials, and on-hand or approved used materials.

FY 2010 Activities.

In FY 2010, NRCS allocated $7.5 million of CCC funds to the AMA States for financial and technical assistance for approval of new AMA contracts. Of this amount, $6 million was obligated into 429 contracts covering 11,102 acres. Cumulatively, AMA has 814 contracts in implementation and a continuing backlog of applications that indicates strong support among producers for the program. At the end of FY 2010, AMA had a backlog of 767 applications, with an estimated contract value of $5.1 million, covering 9,553 acres.

AMA provides many producers a first-time opportunity to address natural resource concerns on their lands. For example, many producers have not been able to participate in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) because they do not meet the eligibility criteria that land must have been irrigated for, two of the previous five years to receive EQIP funding. A number of these EQIP-ineligible producers are small-acreage or specialty-crop farming operations that provide high dollar value products to the general public. By helping to mitigate the risks associated with these kinds of agricultural enterprises, AMA helps agriculture remain a valuable segment of local economies.

AMA funding helps address issues of concern to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative (CBWI) as the AMA States of New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Delaware, and Maryland implement water quality practices in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed drainage area.

Getting Conservation on the Ground.
Massachusetts: Irrigation System Helps Save Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). When the Trustees of Reservations took over Appleton Farms in Ipswich, Massachusetts, in 1999, it committed to being both an education center and an economically viable farm. Establishing a CSA program was essential to achieving both these goals. In a CSA program, a farmer grows food for a group of local residents (shareholders) who commit to purchasing part of the farm's crop, thereby providing working capital to the farm, in exchange for a regular supply of low-cost, fresh, high-quality produce.

Appleton Farms and NRCS developed a conservation plan to establish a reliable supply of irrigation water paralleling growth of the CSA. With AMA support, the farm installed 2,000 feet of underground mainline to the CSA fields from a new non-AMA well in 2002, which provided drip irrigation capacity to 15 acres of vegetables. By 2010, the number of annual CSA program shares increased from the initial 100 to 550. According to the farm manager, the irrigation system helped save the CSA program in 2010 when no rain fell for nearly three months; with drip irrigation, the crops thrived with minimum impact on the watershed. Through the CSA programs, local families regularly receive fresh produce while also learning about farming, nutrition, organic growing methods, and local agricultural issues, and one of the oldest farms in the country has been rejuvenated and made economically viable.

Connecticut: Conservation Measures Help Beginning Farmer Reduce Risks. Fort Hill Farm is a small, 20-acre certified organic farm in New Milford, Connecticut, that produces herbs, flowers, fruit, and vegetables – including arugula, mizuna, red kale, lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, sugar snap peas, winter squash, sweet potatoes, leeks, garlic tomatoes, and eggplant. The farm sells its produce to two farmers markets, several natural food stores, and a 200-share CSA program. The owner, a beginner farmer who has been operating for three years, uses a broad range of biological farming approaches, including on-farm composting and extensive use of cover crops to control weeds and improve soil organic matter. Through the AMA Program, he has installed an irrigation well and deer fencing and implemented an integrated pest management plan to protect water quality. These conservation practices have helped reduce the farm's risk of crop loss due to lack of water, wildlife damage, and insect and disease problems.

CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED PROGRAM

Current Activities
Background. The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 authorized the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program. Section 2605 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Act) (P.L. 110-246, June 18, 2008) added the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program to the Food Security Act of 1985 (1985 Act). The 2008 Act amended Chapter 5 of subtitle D of Title XII of the 1985 Act by inserting after section 1240P (16 U.S.C. 3839bb–3) the following new section: Section 1240Q – Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Program Objectives. The Chesapeake Bay is a national treasure constituting the largest estuary in the United States and one of the largest and most biologically productive estuaries in the world. However, water pollution in the Chesapeake Bay is preventing the attainment of existing State water quality standards and the "fishable and swimmable" goals of the Clean Water Act.

The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program (CBWP) helps agricultural producers improve water quality and quantity, and restore, enhance, and preserve soil, air, and related resources in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed through the implementation of conservation practices. These conservation practices reduce soil erosion and nutrient levels in ground and surface water; improve, restore, and enhance wildlife habitat; and help address air quality and related natural resource concerns. CBWP encompasses all tributaries, backwaters, and side channels, including their watersheds, draining into the Chesapeake Bay. This area includes portions of the states of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Program Operations. NRCS implements CBWP through the various natural resources conservation programs authorized by subtitle D, Title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985. In FY 2010, NRCS implemented CBWP through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). NRCS announced the availability of CBWP funding through a request for proposals.

CBWP funding supports the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Program, a regional initiative that helps Federal and State agencies, local governments, nonprofit groups, and citizens address resource concerns and reach mutually established goals for clean and sustainable ecosystems. CBWP funding also supports Executive Order 13508, Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration, issued by President Obama in May 2009. This Executive Order declared the Chesapeake Bay a national treasure and ushered in a new era of shared Federal leadership, action, and accountability. Thus CBWP priorities are also national priorities, and include focusing on high priority watersheds, focusing and integrating Federal and State programs, accelerating conservation adoption, and accelerating development of new conservation technologies.

Eligibility. Only agricultural producers owning or operating within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed are eligible to participate in CBWP. In addition, NRCS applies the eligibility requirements of the particular natural resource program used to implement CBWP (e.g., EQIP, WHIP).

Conservation Plan. With assistance from NRCS or approved technical service providers (TSPs), an agricultural producer develops a conservation plan for the offered acres initially determined eligible. The plan specifies the method in which the planned conservation treatment practices and systems on the enrolled acres will be implemented, operated, and maintained. It is the basis for the program contract.

Financial Assistance. NRCS uses CBWP funds to enter into contracts with eligible producers to share the costs of the applicable conservation treatment on agricultural lands in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. NRCS provides payments for approved conservation practices and systems and land use adjustments within a time schedule specified by the conservation plan. The CBWP contracts may be modified to increase funds provided the increased cost is the result of a valid contract modification within the original contract scope and intent. The modification must follow the rules of the conservation program used to apply the conservation treatment.

Technical Assistance. NRCS provides technical assistance through CBWP to help land users address opportunities, concerns, and problems related to the use of natural resources and to help land users make sound natural resource management decisions on lands within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Examples of technical assistance include helping producers identify conservation problems through resource inventories and proposing conservation practices to solve the problems.

Partnerships. NRCS consults with appropriate Federal and State agencies to ensure CBWP conservation activities complement other Federal and State programs in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

FY 2010 Activities.

In FY 2010, nearly 2,900 agricultural producers submitted applications to NRCS to participate in CBWP. NRCS approved more than 950 contracts for more than $33.5 million of financial assistance to treat an estimated 156,700 acres of high priority agricultural land. Examples of conservation treatment practices include conservation crop rotation, conservation tillage, cover crop, fence, waste storage facility, riparian buffers, heavy use area protection, nutrient management, upland wildlife habitat management, and streambank and shoreline protection.

NRCS's FY 2010 CBWP technical and financial assistance played an important role in the improvement of water by addressing numerous natural resource concerns:

- Nitrogen, phosphorous, sediment and chemical contaminants make achieving water quality goals throughout the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed a challenge.
- Water quality in the Bay is extremely poor, meeting only 24 percent of goals established by the Chesapeake Bay Program.
- Stream quality in the watershed is degraded. Fifty two percent of the streams having a rating of poor or very poor (based on the index of biological integrity).
- Low populations of fish and shellfish, including American and hickory shad, river herring, striped bass, eel, weakfish, bluefish, flounder, oysters, and blue crabs, continue to be a concern. These various populations hold tremendous ecological, commercial, and cultural value.
- Development leads to continued loss of habitats and agricultural land.

To help producers apply conservation treatment, CBWP made extensive use of TSPs in FY 2010. Approximately $148,000 was obligated to 13 TSPs to enable them to provide technical assistance to producers.

Getting Conservation on the Ground.
Targeting Resources to Maximize Impact. In FY 2010, NRCS identified priority watersheds to target conservation treatment efforts. NRCS used U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) nutrient and sediment load data to identify 20.5 million priority acres at the subwatershed (12-digit HUC or hydrologic unit code) level within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Based on the USGS and EPA data, NRCS targeted more than 98 percent of its FY 2010 CBWP funding toward the priority areas—an approach that is expected will maximize the environmental benefits of the program's conservation practices on improving water quality and enhancing wildlife habitat.

Virginia: Ingleside Dairy. The Leeches of Rockbridge County, Virginia, operate Ingleside Dairy in an idyllic mountain setting just outside the City of Lexington. In addition to eliminating any chemicals in their farming operations that may be toxic to fish, they are implementing several projects under the CBWP. These projects include an innovative nitrogen injection technique for nutrient management, rotational grazing, excluding cattle on a stream feeding into Buffalo Creek, and planting warm season grasses. CBWP has allowed the Leeches to be active participants in protecting water quality through conservation practices applied on their farm.

HEALTHY FORESTS RESERVE PROGRAM

Current Activities
Background. Title V of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (P.L. 108-148) authorized the establishment of the Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP), amended by the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill), P.L. 110-246.

Program Objectives. HFRP assists landowners in restoring, enhancing, and protecting forest ecosystems to: 1) promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species; 2) improve biodiversity; and 3) enhance carbon sequestration.

Program Operations. HFRP provides financial assistance for specific conservation actions completed by the landowner. As funds are made available, the NRCS Chief solicits project proposals State Conservationists have developed in cooperation with partnering organizations. States selected for funding provide public notice of the availability of funding within the selected area. HFRP offers four enrollment options:

- 10-year restoration agreement. The landowner may receive 50 percent of the average cost of the approved conservation practices;
- 30-year contract (equivalent to the value of a 30-year easement). The landowner may receive 75 percent of the easement value of the enrolled land plus 75 percent of the average cost of the approved conservation restoration practices. This option is available to Indian Tribes only;

- 30-year easement. The landowner may receive 75 percent of the easement value of the enrolled land plus 75 percent of the average cost of the approved conservation practices; or
- Permanent easement. The landowners may receive 100 percent of the easement value of the enrolled land plus 100 percent of the average cost of the approved conservation practices.

Eligibility and Restoration Plans. Only privately held land, including acreage owned by a Tribe, is eligible for enrollment in HFRP. In addition, to be eligible, the landowner must commit to restoring, enhancing, or measurably increasing the likelihood of recovery of a threatened or endangered species or candidates for the Federal or State threatened or endangered species list, and must improve biological diversity or increase carbon sequestration. Land enrolled in HFRP must have a restoration plan that includes practices necessary to restore and enhance habitat for species listed as threatened or endangered or species that are candidates for the threatened or endangered species list. NRCS provides technical assistance to help owners comply with the terms of their HFRP restoration plans.

Landowners may receive safe harbor assurance for land enrolled in the HFRP who agree, for a specified period, to protect, restore, or enhance their land for threatened or endangered species habitat. In exchange, landowners avoid future regulatory restrictions on the use of that land under the Endangered Species Act.

Financial Assistance. NRCS provides payments consistent with the enrollment option in either a single payment or in no more than ten annual payments, as agreed to between NRCS and the landowner. NRCS also provides cost-share payments upon a determination that an eligible conservation practice or an identifiable component of the conservation practice has been established in compliance with appropriate standards and specifications.

Technical Assistance. In coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service, NRCS works with landowners to develop healthy forests management conservation plans for land eligible for enrollment in HFRP. The conservation plan integrates compatible silvicultural practices and habitat considerations to protect, restore, and enhance forest ecosystems for the recovery of threatened and endangered species and candidate species. NRCS continues to provide assistance to the participant after the project is enrolled, by reviewing restoration measures and providing guidance on management activities and biological advice to achieve optimum results.

FY 2010 Activities.

During FY 2010, NRCS received 164 applications in the 13 States with approved projects. Fourteen landowners were enrolled, encompassing 5,583 acres, with financial assistance obligations valued over $6 million.

Cumulatively, HFRP has enrolled 27 landowners in the program, encompassing 691,860 acres, as the table below shows. Of these, six landowners have 10-year restoration agreements, and 21 have either 30-year or permanent easements.

Cumulative Program Activity and Enrollment (Through End of FY 2010)	**Cumulative**
Total applications processed	456
Total landowners enrolled	27
Total acres enrolled	691,860
Total obligations	$10,060,325
Restoration Agreements	**Cumulative**
Number of agreements	6
Restoration acres enrolled	687,400
Obligations for restoration agreements	$1,276,358
Easements (30-year and Permanent)	**Cumulative**
Number of easements	21
Easement acres enrolled	4,460
Obligations for easements	$8,783,967

Getting Conservation on the Ground.

Oregon: Partnership Protects Working Forest and Enhances Habitat. In FY 2010, NRCS partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) to provide private landowners the opportunity to create a northern spotted owl (NSO) habitat while maintaining a working forest. NSO habitat in the Pacific Northwest is an important criterion for defining healthy forests, making HFRP an excellent vehicle for this effort. NRCS developed HFRP long term management requirements and sideboards as a supplement to the ODF Forest Stewardship Plan on 11 properties being offered for permanent easements.

The supplements specify the long term management requirements and sideboards of each individual property; some properties opted for even-age stand management and others for the uneven-age stand management regime. The FSP-HFRP supplement recognizes the requirements of a State of Oregon Stewardship Agreement and will require that the landowner intends to meet or exceed all Oregon Forest Practices Act standards current at the time of approval including provisions for Riparian Management Areas. The information contained in the supplement provides guidance and requirements to reach landowner and program goals and objectives. The supplements include area regulation timelines and overall forest management practices for thinning, patch cuts, planting, canopy cover requirements and specific management regimes for each property.

NRCS worked closely with FWS and ODF to ensure consistency among agencies' requirements while developing the supplements. The supplements use forest management to enhance future NSO habitat and maintain existing habitat. NRCS, FWS, and ODF entered into a programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement to provide assurances to the landowner if they manage the property according to the Forest Stewardship Plan supplement. NRCS develops conservation plans and landowner conservation program contracts to implement the conservation practices necessary for restoration, enhancement, and management for NSO as planned in the Forest Stewardship Plan supplement. NRCS has completed the supplement plans for 11 properties in western Oregon totaling 1,852 acres of valuable habitat for the endangered NSO on these potential permanent easements. The HFRP work has been an excellent demonstration of one-on-one conservation planning resulting in detailed landowner decisions while allowing management flexibility for plans that will stretch into perpetuity. This has been an excellent model for all nonindustrial forest planning.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Summary of Budget and Performance
Statement of Department Goals and Objectives

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) was established pursuant to Public Law 103-354, the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, (7 U.S.C. 6962). The mission of NRCS is "Helping People Help The Land." The agency accomplishes its mission by providing products and services that enable people to be good stewards of the Nation's soil, water, and related natural resources on non-Federal lands.

NRCS administers the following programs:

- Conservation Operations (CO), which includes Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA), Soil Survey, Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting (SNOW), and Plant Material Centers (PMCs);
- Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO), which includes Watershed Operations authorized by P.L. 78-534 (P.L. 534), Small Watersheds authorized by P.L. 83-566 (P.L. 566), as amended, and Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP);
- Watershed Rehabilitation Program (REHAB);
- Resource Conservation and Development (RCD);
- Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP);
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP);
- Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP);
- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP);
- Conservation Security Program (CSP);
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP);
- Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA);
- Grassland Reserve Program (GRP);
- Healthy Forest Reserve Program (HFRP);
- Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP); and
- Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program (CBWP).

The agency also provides technical assistance to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) administered by Farm Services Agency.

Agency Strategic Plan. NRCS's conservation programs and services address all natural resource concerns. Our goal is not just a sustainable, nutritious, abundant food supply, but also thriving ecosystems that support a diversity of life. In the coming years, NRCS will continue to tackle familiar challenges like ensuring clean water, healthy soil, clean air, clean energy, climate change, and new technology.

During FY 2010, NRCS developed a strategic plan that provides the vision, direction and performance measures to achieve our mission through three priorities established by the Chief: Getting More Conservation on the Ground; Increase Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency; and Create a Climate in which Private Lands Conservation will Continue to Succeed. These priorities align with USDA Strategic Goals. The NRCS priorities/objectives address each of the USDA management initiatives. In FY 2011 the agency is developing outcome-based performance measures that reflect the effects of applied conservation practices based on available science. These performance measures will create a more transparent link between outputs and outcome.

- Getting More Conservation on the Ground. NRCS prioritizes activities that protect the natural resource base for future generations, leaving as a legacy clean air and water, abundant wildlife habitat, and productive soils that can support life.
- Increase Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency. Service is synonymous with who we are. Accountability to the NRCS customers and the public is the measure of the agency's organizational success which also depends on integrity at every level.

- Create a Climate in which Private Lands Conservation will Continue to Succeed. The agency was founded to provide conservation planning and technical assistance to America's landowners and our reputation has been based on our skill in those areas. NRCS works closely with partners and reach out to forge new alliances to advance conservation.

NRCS's strategic plan reaffirms our continuing mission—helping the people who manage the Nation's soil and water resources to improve and maintain the productive capacity of the resource base and the quality of the environment today and for the future.

The following table displays the links between the USDA strategic goals and the NRCS strategic goal, key outcomes, and long-term measures.

USDA Strategic Goal	Agency Strategic Goal/Measure	Key Outcome	Long-term Measures	Programs that Contribute
USDA Strategic Goal: USDA will assist rural communities to create prosperity so they are self-sustaining, repopulating and economically thriving.	**Agency Goal:** Getting More Conservation on the Ground **Measure:** Decrease hazards to public safety and health due to natural resource concerns or issues	Key Outcome 3: Clean and Abundant Water -Water Quantity: Water is conserved and protected to ensure an abundant and reliable supply for the Nation.	• Improved water use on agricultural operations.	CO (SNOW), P.L. 83-566*, P.L. 78 534*,
USDA Strategic Goal: USDA will ensure our national forests and private working lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while enhancing our water resources.	**Agency Goal:** Getting More Conservation on the Ground **Measure:** Decrease hazards to public safety and health due to natural resource concerns or issues	Key Outcome 1: High-quality, Productive Soils: The quality of intensively used soils is maintained or enhanced to enable sustained production of a safe, healthy and abundant food and fiber supply.	• Improve soil health and productivity on agricultural operations.	CO (CTA, SOIL), EQIP, CSP, CStP, FRPP
		Key Outcome 2: Clean and Abundant Water - Water Quality: The quality of surface water and groundwater is improved and maintained to protect human health, support a healthy environment, and enable productive use of the land.	• Reduce sediment delivery from agricultural operations. • Reduce nitrogen delivery from agricultural operations. • Reduce phosphorus delivery from agricultural operations.	AMA, CO (CTA, PMC), P.L. 78 534*, P.L. 83-566*, EWP*, WRP, EQIP, AWEP, CBWP, CSP, CStP, CRP

USDA Strategic Goal	Agency Strategic Goal/Measure	Key Outcome	Long-term Measures	Programs that Contribute
		Key Outcome 3: Clean and Abundant Water - Water Quantity: Water is conserved and protected to ensure an abundant and reliable supply for the Nation.	• Improved water use on agricultural operations.	AMA, CO (CTA, SNOW), EQIP, AWEP, CSP, CStP, Watershed Rehabilitation *
USDA Strategic Goal: USDA will ensure our national forests and private working lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while enhancing our water resources.	**Agency Goal:** Getting More Conservation on the Ground **Measure:** Decrease hazards to public safety and health due to natural resource concerns or issues:	Key Outcome 4: Clean Air: Farmers and ranchers make a positive contribution to local air quality.	• Reduce soil loss from wind on agricultural operations.	CO (CTA), EQIP, CSP, CStP, EQIP (CIG)
		Key Outcome 5: Healthy Plant and Animal Communities - Grassland and Rangeland Ecosystems: Grassland and rangeland ecosystems are productive, diverse, and resilient and provide a wide variety of environmental services.	• Improve vegetative cover on native and managed grazing land.	CO (CTA), EQIP, CSP, CStP, GRP, FRPP
		Key Outcome 6: Healthy Plant and Animal Communities - Forest Land Ecosystems: Healthy forest lands that are productive, diverse, and resilient and provide a wide range of ecosystem services.	• Improve the health and productive capacity of private forest land.	CO (CTA), EQIP, HFRP, CStP, FRPP
		Key Outcome 7: Healthy Plant and Animal Communities - Fish and Wildlife Habitat: Working lands and waters provide habitat for diverse and healthy wildlife, aquatic species, and plant communities.	• Improve wildlife lands on agricultural lands.	CO (CTA), CSP, CStP, WRP, HFRP, EQIP, WHIP, CRP
		Key Outcome 8: Healthy Plant and Animal Communities - Wetlands:	• Increase wetland acreage on private working lands.	CO (CTA), WRP, CRP,

USDA Strategic Goal	Agency Strategic Goal/Measure	Key Outcome	Long-term Measures	Programs that Contribute
		Wetlands provide high quality habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife, protect water quality, and reduce flood damage.		EQIP
USDA Strategic Goal: USDA will help America promote agricultural production and biotechnology exports as America works to increase food security.	**Agency Goal:** Getting More Conservation on the Ground **Measure:** Decrease hazards to public safety and health due to natural resource concerns or issues	Key Outcome 2: Clean and Abundant Water - Water Quality: The quality of surface water and groundwater is improved and maintained to protect human health, support a healthy environment, and enable productive use of the land.	• Reduce sediment delivery from agricultural operations. • Reduce nitrogen delivery from agricultural operations. • Reduce phosphorus delivery from agricultural operations.	CO (PMC)

*Not funded in the FY 2012 President's Budget, however, ongoing contracts will result in continued performance.

Key Outcome 1 — High-quality, Productive Soils: The quality of intensively used soils is maintained or enhanced to enable sustained production of a safe, healthy and abundant food and fiber supply.

Soil quality describes the capacity of a soil to sustain plant and animal productivity, maintain or enhance water and air quality, and support human health and habitation. High-quality soils are the foundation of productive croplands, forest lands, and grasslands and a vibrant and productive agriculture. NRCS provides landowners and land users with assistance in adopting environmentally sound management practices. NRCS provides information on soil quality, plant materials, resource management and provides assistance in using the information to implement sustainable production techniques and new technologies. Land managers who receive NRCS technical assistance are more likely to plan, apply, and maintain conservation systems that support agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals.

Long-term Performance Measures:
Target: By 2015, farmers will manage 70 percent of cropland under systems that maintain or improve soil condition and increase soil carbon.
Baseline: In 2003, 60 percent of cropland was farmed under systems that maintained or improved soil condition and increased soil carbon.

Selected Past Accomplishments toward Achievement of the Key Outputs:

Program	Performance Measure	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual
CO-CTA	Cropland with conservation practices applied to improve soil quality, million acres	7.3	8.3	7.6	8.2
EQIP	Cropland with conservation practices applied to improve soil quality, million acres	5.3	5.6	4.8	4.8
CStP	Under development	NA	NA	NA	NA

Selected Accomplishments Expected at the FY 2012 Proposed Resource Level:

Program	Performance Measure	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
CO-CTA	Cropland with conservation practices applied to improve soil quality, million acres	7.7	7.3
EQIP	Cropland with conservation practices applied to improve soil quality, million acres	4.8	4.8
CStP	Under development	TBD	TBD

Efficiency Measures:

Program	Efficiency Measure
CO-CTA	Under development
EQIP	Under development

Key Outcome 2 — Clean and Abundant Water - Water Quality: The quality of surface water and groundwater is improved and maintained to protect human health, support a healthy environment, and enable productive use of the land.

Water running off or infiltrating the ground from agricultural operations can carry a number of pollutants into streams, lakes, groundwater, and estuaries. States and Tribes have identified sediment and nutrients as the greatest agricultural contaminants affecting surface water quality; nutrients and agrichemicals are the major concerns for groundwater. NRCS sets long-term targets for reducing sediment and nutrients movement as a result of agricultural operations. Long-term measures are supported by annual measures for application of conservation practices that reduce erosion and runoff and movement of nutrients.

Long Term Performance Measures:

- Reduce sediment delivery from agricultural operations.
  Target: By 2015, sediment delivery from agricultural operations will be reduced by an additional 37.5 million tons (3.8 percent improvement over 2003 baseline).
  Baseline: In FY 2003, sediment delivery from agricultural operations was 970 million tons.
- Reduce nitrogen delivery from agricultural operations.
  Target: By 2015, delivery of nitrogen from agricultural operations will be reduced by an additional 215,000 tons (3.6 percent improvement over 2003 baseline).
  Baseline: In FY 2003, annual nitrogen delivery from agricultural operations was an estimated 6 million tons.
- Reduce phosphorus delivery from agricultural operations.
  Target: By 2015, delivery of phosphorus from agricultural operations will be reduced by an additional 37,500 tons (10.4 percent improvement over 2003 baseline).

Baseline: In FY 2003, annual phosphorus delivery from agricultural operations was an estimated 360,000 tons.

High Priority Performance Goals: Continue the acceleration to protect clean, abundant water resources by implementing high impact targeted (HIT) [1] practices on six million acres of National Forest and private working lands in priority landscapes for FY 2011, the second year of a two year USDA pilot project. The priority landscapes are within the USDA designated Priority Watersheds of National Importance- Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, and Mississippi River Basins and the California Bay Delta. For more information go to: http://www.performance.gov/

Program	Performance Measure	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
CO-CTA	Priority landscapes with high impact targeted conservation practices applied to improve water quality, acres	1,943,355	2,000,000	1,800,000
EQIP	Priority landscapes with high impact targeted conservation practices applied to improve water quality, acres	761,582	775,000	800,000
CStP	Under development	TBD	TBD	TBD

[1] High Impact Targeted (HIT) Practices are defined as a suite of practices that when combined, offer the greatest opportunity to prevent, control and trap nutrients, sediments, air particulates and compounds from being generated or leaving an area under agricultural production. An example would be cover crops to avoid loss of nutrients to surface and ground water, combined with no-till cropping to control erosion and reduce sediment/nutrient runoff, and using a wetland to trap nutrients and sediment on cropland to reduce the edge of field/root zone loss of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment.

Selected Past Accomplishments toward Achievement of the Key Outputs:

Program	Performance Measure	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual
CO-CTA	Comprehensive nutrient management plans applied, number	1,911	1,745	1,485	1,349
EQIP	Comprehensive nutrient management plans applied, number	2,490	2,520	2,019	1,739
CBWP	Land with conservation applied to improve water quality, acres	NA	NA	4,572	94,088[1]

[1] Prior to FY 2009, conservation practices applied within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed were contracted under EQIP and are reflected in national EQIP performance. The Chesapeake Bay Watershed specific program (CBWP) was established in the 2008 Farm Bill. Performance for FY 2009 focused more on contract and conservation plan development. In FY2010 the results of these efforts are reflected in the substantial increase in applied acreage of conservation practices in FY 2010. As shown in the FY 2011 and FY 2012 targets, the acres of applied conservation practices to improve water quality should increase each fiscal year. For more information go to: http://www.performance.gov/

Selected Accomplishments Expected at the FY 2012 Proposed Resource Level:

Program	Performance Measure	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
CO-CTA	Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans applied, number	1,350	1,350
EQIP	Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans applied, number	1,500	1,500
CBWP	Land with conservation practices applied to improve water quality, acres	125,000	145,000

Efficiency Measures:

Program	Efficiency Measure
CO-CTA	Under Development
EQIP	Under Development

Key Outcome 3 — Clean and Abundant Water - Water Quantity: Water is conserved and protected to ensure an abundant and reliable supply for the Nation.

Agriculture is one of the largest users of the Nation's surface water and groundwater, with irrigation being the greatest use. In arid and semi-arid areas, crop production depends almost entirely on irrigation. Competition for water in these areas is increasing as a result of increased human populations. In recent years, irrigation has been increasing in eastern States, resulting in increased competition among users. NRCS has set a long-term target for the conservation of water. The long-term measure is supported by an annual measure for the application of practices that improve the management of irrigation water.

Long Term Performance Measures:
Target: By 2015, farmers and ranchers will establish conservation measures that conserve an additional 6.25 million acre-feet of water (250 percent improvement over baseline).
Baseline: In 2005, an estimated 2.5 million acre-feet of water were conserved.

High Priority Performance Goals: Accelerate the protection of clean, abundant water resources by implementing high impact targeted (HIT)[1] practices on a total (FY 2010 & 2011, CTA and EQIP) of 400,000 acres of National Forest and private working lands in priority landscapes for FY 2011, the second year of a two year USDA pilot project. The priority landscapes are within the USDA designated Priority Watersheds of National Importance: Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, and Mississippi River basins and the California Bay. For more information go to: http://www.performance.gov/

Program	Performance Measure	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
CO-CTA	Priority landscapes with high impact targeted conservation practices applied to improve irrigation efficiency, acres[1]	83,740	100,000	80,000
EQIP	Priority landscapes with high impact targeted conservation practices applied to improve irrigation efficiency, acres[1]	76,024	85,000	100,000

[1]High Impact Targeted (HIT) Practices are defined as a suite of practices that when combined, offer the greatest opportunity to improve irrigation efficiency for areas under agricultural production. The practice suite includes those practices specifically designed to improve water use. Example: conservation irrigation management to improve management and efficiency of irrigated water use in crop production.

Selected Past Accomplishments toward Achievement of the Key Outputs:

Program	Performance Measure	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual
CO-CTA	Land with conservation practices applied to improve irrigation efficiency, acres	828,246	844,818	753,214	758,036
EQIP	Land with conservation practices applied to improve irrigation efficiency, acres	883,033	1,048,319	1,131,159	967,495

Selected Accomplishments Expected at the FY 2012 Proposed Resource Level:

Program	Performance Measure	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
CO-CTA	Land with conservation applied to improve irrigation efficiency, acres	775,000	775,000
EQIP	Land with conservation applied to improve irrigation efficiency, acres	1,000,000	1,200,000

Efficiency Measures:

Program	Efficiency Measure
CO-CTA	Under Development.
EQIP	Under Development.

Key Outcome 4 — Clean Air: Farmers and ranchers make a positive contribution to local air quality.

The quality of air affects every component of the natural system: soil, water, plants, animals, and people. As air quality and atmospheric change concerns increase, NRCS anticipates an expanded conservation focus on these issues. Many practices that protect soil and water also protect air quality. NRCS is revising and adapting conservation standards and specifications to better address air issues. NRCS will acquire and develop needed resource data and technology and encourage accelerated adoption of practices to address air quality concerns.

Long-Term Performance Measures:
Target: By 2015, farmers and ranchers will apply conservation measures to reduce annual soil losses from wind erosion by seven percent.
Baseline: In 2003, wind erosion accounted for more than 776 million tons of soil loss from cropland.

Selected Past Accomplishments toward Achievement of the Key Outputs:
NRCS is developing an annual performance measure to track the acreage on which conservation practices have been applied to reduce wind erosion. The agency incorporates air quality considerations into conservation planning with producers. NRCS has seven full-time staff members dedicated to air quality issues and development of technological innovations. The NRCS Chief chairs a task force to address air quality issues. This task force includes USDA employees, industry representatives, and other experts in the fields of agriculture and air quality and advises the Secretary in order to ensure that Federal policy, in regard to air pollution, is based on sound scientific findings that are subject to adequate peer review and take into account economic feasibility.

Selected Accomplishments Expected at the FY 2012 Proposed Resource Level:
Performance measures and targets have not been established to indicate the high level of NRCS assistance to producers to address six air quality and atmospheric change concerns: particulate matter (including coarse and fine particles, smoke, dust, and off-site effects from wind erosion), ozone precursors, odor, chemical drift, ammonia, and greenhouse gases and carbon sequestration. New performance measures and targets will be established in FY 2011 to address air quality and atmospheric change. NRCS will continue to provide the field

with information and tools (technology transfer) necessary to maintain high quality service to the agricultural community.

Key Outcome 5 — Healthy Plant and Animal Communities - Grassland and Rangeland Ecosystems: Grassland and rangeland ecosystems are productive, diverse, and resilient and provide a wide variety of environmental services.

Healthy, vigorous plant communities on rangeland and native or naturalized pasture lands protect soil quality, prevent soil erosion, provide sustainable forage and cover for livestock and wildlife, provide fiber, improve water quality, provide diverse habitat for wildlife, and sequester carbon. Sustaining healthy grassland and rangeland ecosystems is achieved by focusing on interacting relationships between plant and animal species within a given ecosystem and their relationship to the physical features and processes of their environment. NRCS provides data and technical and financial assistance to people interested in creating, restoring, protecting and enhancing grassland and rangeland.

Long Term Performance Measure:
Target: By 2015, farmers, ranchers, and other landowners will apply management practices that will maintain or improve long-term vegetative condition on 150 million acres of grazing land (50percent improvement over baseline).
Baseline: In 1999, about 300 million acres of non-Federal grazing land were considered to be in minimal or degrading vegetative condition.

Selected Past Accomplishments toward Achievement of the Key Outputs

Program	Performance Measure	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual
CO-CTA	Grazing land with conservation applied to protect the resource base, million acres	NA	NA	NA	17.0
EQIP	Grazing land with conservation applied to protect the resource base, million acres	NA	NA	NA	16.7

Selected Accomplishments Expected at the FY 2012 Proposed Resource Level:

Program	Performance Measure	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
CO-CTA	Grazing land with conservation applied to protect the resource base, million acres	15.0	14.5
EQIP	Grazing land with conservation applied to protect and improve the resource base, million acres	15.0	15.5

Note: Starting in FY2010, the former performance measure that covered grazing land and forest land has been split into two distinct measures, one for grazing land and one for forest land.

Key Outcome 6 — Healthy Plant and Animal Communities - Forest Land Ecosystems: Healthy forest lands that are productive, diverse, and resilient and provide a wide range of ecosystem services.

Healthy, vigorous plant communities on forest lands protect soil quality, prevent soil erosion, provide fiber, improve water quality, provide diverse habitat for wildlife, and sequester carbon. Sustaining healthy forest ecosystems is achieved by focusing on interacting relationships between plant and animal species within a given ecosystem and their relationship to the physical features and processes of their environment. NRCS provides data and technical and financial assistance to people interested in creating, restoring, protecting and enhancing forest lands.

Long Term Performance Measure:

Target: By 2015, non-industrial private forest landowners will apply management practices that will maintain or improve vegetative condition and protect and enhance ecosystem services on nine million acres of non-industrial private forest land that are considered to have minimal or degrading vegetative conditions (an improvement of 4.5 percent over 2003 baseline).

Baseline: In 2003, about 200 million acres of non-industrial private forest land were considered to be in minimal or degrading vegetative condition due to overstocking, invasive species, wildfire damage, insects, hurricane damage, or other factors.

Selected Past Accomplishments toward Achievement of the Key Outputs:

Program	Performance Measure	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual
CO-CTA	Forest land with conservation applied to protect and improve vegetative condition, acres	NA	NA	NA	636,589
EQIP	Forest land with conservation applied to protect and improve vegetative condition, acres	NA	NA	NA	807,766

Selected Accomplishments Expected at the FY 2012 Proposed Resource Level:

Program	Performance Measure	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
CO-CTA	Forest land with conservation applied to protect and improve vegetative condition, acres	600,000	575,000
EQIP	Forest land with conservation applied to protect and improve vegetative condition, acres	700,000	700,000

Note: Starting in FY2010, the former performance measure that covered grazing land and forest land has been split into two distinct measures, one for grazing land and one for forest land.

Efficiency Measures:

Program	Efficiency Measure
CO-CTA	Under Development.
EQIP	Under Development.

Key Outcome 7 — Healthy Plant and Animal Communities - Fish and Wildlife Habitat: Working lands and waters provide habitat for diverse and healthy wildlife, aquatic species, and plant communities.

Privately-owned and other non-Federal lands provide habitat for much of the Nation's wildlife. Protecting specific ecosystems and landscapes, including wetlands, grasslands, floodplains, and certain types of forests, can help support wildlife and aquatic species and provide benefits in the form of recreation, hunting, and other forms of agri-tourism. NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to maintain and enhance fish and wildlife habitat on non-Federal lands.

Long-Term Performance Measures:
Target: By 2015, farmers, ranchers, and non-industrial private forest landowners will implement conservation measures to improve an additional 8.5 million acres of essential habitat to benefit at-risk or declining species (a 425 percent increase over baseline).
Baseline: In 2005, farmers, ranchers, and other landowners and managers improved habitat for declining and at-risk species on two million acres.

Selected Past Accomplishments toward Achievement of the Key Outputs:

Program	Performance Measure	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual
CO-CTA	Non-Federal land with conservation practices applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality, acres	10,771,278	10,985,276	9,793,927	10,279,912
EQIP	Non-Federal land with conservation practices applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality, acres	4,825,631	4,820,717	5,171,183	6,018,922
WHIP	Non-Federal land with conservation practices applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality, acres	388,769	316,896	335,402	876,895

Selected Accomplishments Expected at the FY 2012 Proposed Resource Level:

Program	Performance Measure	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
CO-CTA	Non-Federal land with conservation practices applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality, acres	8,000,000	8,500,000
EQIP	Non-Federal land with conservation practices applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality, acres	6,000,000	6,000,000
WHIP	Non-Federal land with conservation practices applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality, acres	1,000,000	900,000

Efficiency Measures:

Program	Efficiency Measure
WHIP	Under Development

Key Outcome 8 — Healthy Plant and Animal Communities - Wetlands: Wetlands provide high quality habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife, protect water quality, and reduce flood damage.

Wetlands provide wildlife habitat, protect and improve water quality, lessen flooding impacts, and recharge ground water. NRCS uses voluntary incentives-based approaches to restore wetlands, make wetland determinations, and conduct wetland compliance reviews.
Long-Term Performance Measures:
Target: By 2015, farmers and ranchers will create, restore, or enhance an additional 1.25 million acres of wetlands on non-Federal lands (a 1.1 percent improvement over baseline).
Baseline: In 2003, there were 111 million wetland acres on non-Federal lands in the contiguous United States.

High Priority Performance Goals: Accelerate the protection of clean, abundant water resources by implementing high impact targeted (HIT) practices on six million acres of National Forest and private working lands in priority landscapes.

Program	Performance Measure	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
CTA	Wetlands created, restored or enhanced in priority landscapes, acres	2,650	2,700	2,600
WRP	Wetlands created, restored or enhanced in priority landscapes, acres	8,527	8,500	9,000

Selected Past Accomplishments toward Achievement of the Key Outputs:

Program	Performance Measure	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual
CTA	Wetlands created, restored or enhanced, acres	62,093	72,806	67,233	65,797
WRP	Wetlands created, restored or enhanced, acres	149,330	128,860	106,379	129,062
WRP	Farmland, forest land, and wetlands protected by conservation easements, acres	74,509	56,117	35,338	74,180

Selected Accomplishments Expected at the FY 2012 Proposed Resource Level:

Program	Performance Measure	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
CTA	Wetlands created, restored or enhanced, acres	51,300	51,300
WRP	Wetlands created, restored or enhanced, acres	125,000	140,000
WRP	Farmland, forest land, and wetlands protected by conservation easements, acres	75,000	75,000

Efficiency Measures:

Program	Efficiency Measure
CO-CTA	Under Development
WRP	Percent of WRP easements closed within 12 months of initial project application
	Percent of WRP projects fully restored within three years of closing the easement

Goal: Assist rural communities to create prosperity so they are self-sustaining, repopulating, and economically thriving.

	2010 Actual		2011 Estimated		Increase or	2012 Estimated	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Decrease	Amount	Staff Years
Discretionary:							
Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting	$5,482,000	33	$5,482,000	39	--	$5,482,000	35
Flood Prevention P.L. 78-534							
1. Technical Assistance	515,000	2	515,000	17	-515,000	--	--
2. Financial Assistance	2,058,000	--	2,058,000	--	-2,058,000	--	--
Subtotal. P.L. 78-534	2,573,000	2	2,573,000	17	-2,573,000	--	--
Emergency Watershed Protection Program							
1. Technical Assistance	--	35	--	28	--	--	--
2. Financial Assistance	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Subtotal, EWP	--	35	--	28	--	--	--
Watershed Operations P.L. 83-566							
1. Technical Assistance	3,516,000	14	3,516,000	44	-3,516,000	--	--
2. Financial Assistance	8,911,000	--	8,911,000	--	-8,911,000	--	--
Subtotal. P.L. 83-566	12,427,000	14	12,427,000	44	-12,427,000	--	--
Resource Conservation & Development	50,730,000	403	50,730,000	423	-50,730,000	--	--
Total, Discretionary	71,212,000	487	71,212,000	551	-65,730,000	5,482,000	35
Total, Strategic Goal	71,212,000	487	71,212,000	551	-65,730,000	5,482,000	35

Goal: Ensure our national forests and private working lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while enhancing our water resources.

	2010 Actual		2011 Estimated		Increase	2012 Estimated	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	or Decrease	Amount	Staff Years
Discretionary:							
Conservation Technical Assistance	$772,637,000	5,352	$772,637,000	5,500	$10,018,000	$782,655,000	5,050
Soil Survey	93,939,000	676	93,939,000	679	--	93,939,000	651
Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting	5,483,000	32	5,483,000	39	--	5,483,000	34
Plant Materials Program	5,544,000	49	5,544,000	46	--	5,544,000	46
Flood Prevention Operations P.L. 78-534							
1. Technical Assistance	515,000	3	515,000	16	-515,000	--	--
2. Financial Assistance	2,058,000	--	2,058,000	--	-2,058,000	--	--
Subtotal, P.L. 78-534	2,573,000	3	2,573,000	16	-2,573,000	--	--
Emergency Watershed Protection Program							
1. Technical Assistance	--	105	--	85	--	--	
2. Financial Assistance	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Subtotal, EWP	--	105	--	85	--	--	--
Watershed Operations P.L. 83-566							
1. Technical Assistance	3,516,000	14	3,516,000	43	-3,516,000	--	--
2. Financial Assistance	8,911,000	--	8,911,000	--	-8,911,000	--	--
Subtotal, P.L. 83-566	12,427,000	14	12,427,000	43	-12,427,000	--	--
Watershed Rehabilitation							
1. Technical Assistance	17,200,000	82	11,766,000	71	--	--	--
2. Financial Assistance	22,961,000	--	28,395,000	--	--	--	--
Subtotal, Rehabilitation	40,161,000	82	40,161,000	71	--	--	--
Total, Discretionary	932,764,000	6,313	932,764,000	6,479	-4,982,000	887,621,000	5,781
Mandatory:							
Wetlands Reserve Program	630,139,090	217	726,099,000	343	58,693,000	784,792,000	363
Environmental Quality Incentives Program	1,174,039,275	2,407	1,180,000,000	2,872	228,000,000	1,408,000,000	3,374
Agricultural Water Enhancement Program	72,159,895	65	74,000,000	223	-14,000,000	60,000,000	147
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	82,926,265	126	85,000,000	150	-12,000,000	73,000,000	145
Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program	149,895,863	29	175,000,000	44	25,000,000	200,000,000	49
Conservation Security Program	222,169,415	154	203,406,000	132	-6,321,000	197,085,000	127
Conservation Stewardship Program	389,812,968	496	600,834,000	540	186,805,000	787,639,000	557
Grasslands Reserve Program	100,108,375	28	117,373,000	55	-50,167,000	67,206,000	44
Agricultural Management Assistance	7,249,707	12	7,500,000	33	-5,000,000	2,500,000	23
Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program	44,035,883	85	72,000,000	172	-22,000,000	50,000,000	197
Healthy Forests Reserve Program	7,616,551	6	9,750,000	23	--	9,750,000	15
Conservation Reserve Program	59,563,157	529	124,000,000	1,158	--	124,000,000	1,159
Total, Mandatory	2,939,716,444	4,154	3,374,962,000	5,745	389,010,000	3,763,972,000	6,200
Total, Strategic Goal	$3,872,481,444	10,467	$4,307,726,000	12,224	$384,028,000	$4,651,593,000	11,981

Goal: Help America promote agricultural production and biotechnology exports as America works to increase food security.

	2010 Actual		2011 Estimated		Increase or	2012 Estimated	
	Amount	Staff Years	Amount	Staff Years	Decrease	Amount	Staff Years
Discretionary:							
Plant Materials Program	$5,544,000	49	$5,544,000	46	--	$5,544,000	45
Total, Discretionary	5,544,000	49	5,544,000	46	--	5,544,000	45
Total, Strategic Goal	5,544,000	49	5,544,000	46	--	5,544,000	45

Goal: USDA will assist rural communities to create prosperity so they are self-sustaining, repopulating and economically thriving.

Key Outcome 2: Clean and Abundant Water (Water Quality) - The quality of surface water and groundwater is improved and maintained to protect human health, support a healthy environment, and enable productive use of the land.

Water running off or infiltrating the ground from agricultural operations can carry a number of potential pollutants into streams, lakes, groundwater, and estuaries. States and Tribes have identified sediment and nutrients as the most extensive agricultural contaminants affecting surface water quality; nutrients and agrichemicals are the major concerns for groundwater. NRCS sets long-term targets for reducing sediment and nutrients to move from agricultural operations. Long-term measures are supported by annual measures for application of conservation practices that reduce erosion and runoff and movement of nutrients.

Long-term Performance Measures:

- Reduce sediment delivery from agricultural operations.
  Target: By 2015, sediment delivery from agricultural operations will be reduced by an additional 37.5 million tons.
  Baseline: In FY 2003, sediment delivery from agricultural operations was 970 million tons.

- Reduce nitrogen delivery from agricultural operations.
  Target: By 2015, delivery of nitrogen from agricultural operations will be reduced by an additional 215,000 tons.
  Baseline: In FY 2003, annual nitrogen delivery from agricultural operations was an estimated 6 million tons.

- Reduce phosphorus delivery from agricultural operations.
  Target: By 2015, delivery of phosphorus from agricultural operations will be reduced by an additional 37,500 tons.
  Baseline: In FY 2003, annual phosphorus delivery from agricultural operations was an estimated 360,000 tons.

Key Performance Targets

Performance Measure	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
Jobs created or retained in rural communities through effective natural resource and community planning efforts, number						
RC&D	8,226	9,094	7,843	8,762	8,000	0
Performance measure to be developed						
CStP	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Description of annual performance measures:

- Jobs created or retained in rural communities through effective natural resource and community planning efforts. The number of jobs either created or retained by RC&D projects. This does not include RC&D Coordinator positions, and does not include seasonal jobs.

Key Outcome 3: Clean and Abundant Water (Water Quantity) - Water is conserved and protected to ensure an abundant and reliable supply for the Nation.

Agriculture is one of the largest users of the Nation's surface water and groundwater, with irrigation being the greatest use. In arid and semi-arid areas, crop production depends almost entirely on irrigation. Competition for water in these areas is increasing as a result of increased human populations. In recent years, irrigation has been increasing in eastern States, resulting in increased competition among users. NRCS has set a long-term target for the conservation of water. The long-term measure is supported by an annual measure for the application of practices that improve the management of irrigation water.

Long Term Performance Measures:

- Improved water use on agricultural operations.
  Target: By 2015, farmers and ranchers will establish conservation measures that conserve an additional 6.25 million acre-feet of water.
  Baseline: In 2005, an estimated 2.5 million acre-feet of water were conserved.

Key Performance Targets

Performance Measure	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
Flood prevention or mitigation measures installed, number						
P.L. 83-566	106	74	20	79	60	0
Water supply forecasts issued, number						
CO-Snow Survey	12,141	12,505	12,399	12,400	12,400	12,400

Description of annual performance measures:

- Flood prevention or mitigation measures installed. The number of flood prevention or mitigation measures installed during the fiscal year for the purpose of flood damage reduction. This measure included both structural and non-structural measures.
- Water supply forecasts issued. The total number of water supply forecasts issued within the fiscal year by the Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting program.

Goal: USDA will ensure our national forests and private working lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change while enhancing our water resources.

Key Outcome 1: High-quality, Productive Soils - The quality of intensively used soils is maintained or enhanced to enable sustained production of a safe, healthy and abundant food and fiber supply.

Soil quality describes the capacity of a soil to sustain plant and animal productivity, maintain or enhance water and air quality, and support human health and habitation. High-quality soils are the foundation of productive croplands, forest lands, and grasslands and a vibrant and productive agriculture. NRCS provides landowners and land users with assistance in adopting environmentally sound management practices. NRCS provides information on soil quality, plant materials, resource management and provides assistance in using the information to implement sustainable production techniques and new technologies. Land managers who receive NRCS technical assistance are more likely to plan, apply, and maintain conservation systems that support agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals.

Long-term Performance Measures:

- Improve soil health and productivity on agricultural operations.

Target: By 2015, farmers will manage 70 percent of cropland under systems that maintain or improve soil condition and increase soil carbon.
Baseline: In 2003, 60 percent of cropland was farmed under systems that maintained or improved soil condition and increased soil carbon.

Key Performance Targets:

Performance Measure	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
Cropland with conservation applied to improve soil quality, million acres						
CO-CTA	7.3	8.3	7.6	8.2	7.7	7.3
EQIP	5.3	5.6	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8
Prime, unique or important farmland protected from conversion to non-agricultural uses by conservation easements, acres						
FRPP	38,495	27,401	38,260	53,898	45,000	45,000

Description of annual performance measures:

- Cropland with conservation applied to improve soil quality, million acres. Controlling erosion, minimizing soil disturbance and compaction, and managing plants and soil organic matter are all essential to maximizing soil quality and function for agricultural and environmental benefits. This measure captures the cropland acres on which conservation practices have been applied to improve soil quality, as measured in millions of acres.
- Prime, unique or important farmland protected from conversion to non-agricultural uses by conservation easements, acres. Prime, unique and important farmlands are those that have the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, fiber, forage, or oil seed crops. This measure documents the cumulative acreage of prime, unique and important farmlands that are permanently protected from conversion to non-agricultural uses. This measure reports on acres of prime, unique and important soils protected by permanent easements annually registered at the courthouse.

Key Outcome 2: Clean and Abundant Water (Water Quality) - The quality of surface water and groundwater is improved and maintained to protect human health, support a healthy environment, and enable productive use of the land.

Water running off or infiltrating the ground from agricultural operations can carry a number of potential pollutants into streams, lakes, groundwater, and estuaries. States and Tribes have identified sediment and nutrients as the most extensive agricultural contaminants affecting surface water quality; nutrients and agrichemicals are the major concerns for groundwater. NRCS sets long-term targets for reducing sediment and nutrients to move from agricultural operations. Long-term measures are supported by annual measures for application of conservation practices that reduce erosion and runoff and movement of nutrients.

Long-term Performance Measures:

- Reduce sediment delivery from agricultural operations.
  Target: By 2015, sediment delivery from agricultural operations will be reduced by an additional 37.5 million tons.
  Baseline: In FY 2003, sediment delivery from agricultural operations was 970 million tons.

- Reduce nitrogen delivery from agricultural operations.
  Target: By 2015, delivery of nitrogen from agricultural operations will be reduced by an additional 215,000 tons.
  Baseline: In FY 2003, annual nitrogen delivery from agricultural operations was an estimated 6 million tons.

- Reduce phosphorus delivery from agricultural operations.
  Target: By 2015, delivery of phosphorus from agricultural operations will be reduced by an additional 37,500 tons.
  Baseline: In FY 2003, annual phosphorus delivery from agricultural operations was an estimated 360,000 tons.

Key Performance Targets

Performance Measure	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans applied, number						
CO-CTA	1,911	1,745	1,485	1,349	1,350	1,350
EQIP	2,490	2,520	2,019	1,739	1,500	1,500
Land with conservation applied to improve water quality, acres						
AWEP	N/A	N/A	6,239	117,831	90,000	75,000
CBWP	N/A	N/A	4,572	94,088	125,000	145,000

Description of annual performance measures:

- Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans applied. A CNMP identifies management and conservation actions that will be followed to meet clearly defined soil and water conservation goals, including nutrient management on an animal feeding operation. A CNMP incorporates practices to utilize animal manure and organic by-products as a beneficial resource. CNMPs enable producers to manage collection, storage, and disposal of animal wastes in ways that minimize the potential for damage to the environment.
- Land with conservation plans applied to improve water quality. Land on which one or more conservation practices have been applied to improve quality during the fiscal year, measures in acres treated.

High Priority Performance Goals: Accelerate the protection of clean, abundant water resources by implementing high impact targeted (HIT)[1] practices on a total (FY 2010 & 2011, CTA and EQIP) of 5.6 million acres of National Forest and private working lands in priority landscapes for FY 2011, the second year of a two year USDA pilot project. The priority landscapes are within the USDA designated Priority Watersheds of National Importance: Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, and Mississippi River basins and the California Bay Delta. For more information go to: http://www.performance.gov/

Performance Measure	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
Priority landscapes with high impact targeted conservation practices applied to improve water quality, acres						
CO-CTA	NA	NA	NA	1,943,355	2,000,000	1,800,000
EQIP	NA	NA	NA	761,582	775,000	800,000
Performance measure to be developed						
CStP	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

[1] High Impact Targeted (HIT) Practices are defined as a suite of practices that when combined, offer the greatest opportunity to prevent, control and trap nutrients, sediments ,air particulates and compounds from being generated or leaving an area under agricultural production. The practice suite includes those practices specifically designed to improve water quality. Example: cover crops to prevent loss of sediment and nutrients to surface or ground water minimize water evaporation and improve soil quality.

Key Outcome 3: Clean and Abundant Water (Water Quantity) - Water is conserved and protected to ensure an abundant and reliable supply for the Nation.

Agriculture is one of the largest users of the Nation's surface water and groundwater, with irrigation being the greatest use. In arid and semi-arid areas, crop production depends almost entirely on irrigation. Competition for water in these areas is increasing as a result of increased human populations. In recent years, irrigation has been increasing in eastern States, resulting in increased competition there also. NRCS has set a long-term target for the conservation of water. The long-term measure is supported by an annual measure for application of practices that improve the management of irrigation water.

Long Term Performance Measures:

- Improved water use on agricultural operations

Target: By 2015, farmers and ranchers will establish conservation measures that conserve an additional 6.25 million acre-feet of water.

Baseline: In 2005, an estimated 2.5 million acre-feet of water were conserved.

Key Performance Targets:

Performance Measure	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
Land with conservation practices applied to improve irrigation efficiency, acres						
CO-CTA	828,246	844,818	753,214	758,036	775,000	775,000
EQIP	883,033	1,048,319	1,131,159	967,495	1,000,000	1,200,000
AWEP	N/A	N/A	2,850	93,945	75,000	55,000

Description of annual performance measures:

- Land with conservation applied to improve irrigation efficiency. Irrigation makes a significant contribution to the United States farm economy. Improvements in irrigation water management can help to maintain the viability of the irrigated agricultural sector and help to protect water quality. This indicator reports the adoption of improved technology to replace older methods and other improvements to existing systems.

High Priority Performance Goals: Accelerate the protection of clean, abundant water resources by implementing high impact targeted (HIT)[1] practices on a total (FY 2010 & 2011, CTA+EQIP) of 400,000 acres of National Forest and private working lands in priority landscapes for FY 2011, the second year of a two year USDA pilot project. The priority landscapes are within the USDA designated Priority Watersheds of National Importance: Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, and Mississippi River basins and the California Bay Delta. For more information go to: http://www.performance.gov/

Performance Measure	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
Priority landscapes with high impact targeted conservation practices applied to improve irrigation efficiency, acres						
CO-CTA	NA	NA	NA	83,740	100,000	80,000
EQIP	NA	NA	NA	76,024	85,000	100,000

[1] High Impact Targeted (HIT) Practices are defined as a suite of practices that when combined, offer the greatest opportunity to improve irrigation efficiency for areas under agricultural production. The practice suite includes those practices specifically designed to improve water use. Example: conservation irrigation management to improve management and efficiency of irrigated water use in crop production.

Key Outcome 4: Clean Air - Farmers and ranchers make a positive contribution to local air quality.

The quality of air affects every component of the natural system: soil, water, plants, animals, and people. As air quality and atmospheric change concerns increase, NRCS anticipates an expanded conservation focus on these issues. Many practices that protect soil and water also protect air quality. NRCS is revising and adapting conservation standards and specifications to better address air issues. NRCS will acquire and develop needed resource data and technology and encourage accelerated adoption of practices to address air quality concerns.

Long-Term Performance Measures:

- Reduce soil loss from wind on agricultural operations.

Target: By 2015, farmers and ranchers will apply conservation measures to reduce annual soil losses from wind erosion by 7 percent.
Baseline: In 2003, wind erosion accounted for more than 776 million tons of soil loss from cropland.

Key Outcome 5: –Healthy Plant and Animal Communities (Grassland and Rangeland Ecosystems) - Grassland and rangeland ecosystems are productive, diverse and resilient and provide a wide variety of environmental services.

Healthy, vigorous plant communities on rangeland and native or naturalized pasture lands protect soil quality, prevent soil erosion, provide sustainable forage and cover for livestock and wildlife, provide fiber, improve water quality, provide diverse habitat for wildlife, and sequester carbon. Sustaining healthy grassland and rangeland ecosystems is achieved by focusing on interacting relationships between plant and animal species within a given ecosystem and their relationship to the physical features and processes of their environment. NRCS provides data and technical and financial assistance to people interested in creating, restoring, protecting and enhancing grassland and rangeland.

Long Term Performance Measure:

- Improve vegetative cover on native and managed grazing land.

Target: By 2015, farmers, ranchers, and other landowners will apply management that will maintain or improve long-term vegetative condition on 150 million acres of grazing land.
Baseline: In 1999, about 300 million acres of non-Federal grazing land were considered to be in minimal or degrading vegetative condition.

Key Performance Targets:

Performance Measure	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
Grazing land with conservation practices applied to protect the resource base, million acres						
CO-CTA	NA	NA	NA	17.0	15.0	14.5
EQIP	NA	NA	NA	16.7	15.0	15.5

Note: Starting in FY2010, the former performance measure that covered grazing land and forest land has been split into two distinct measures, one for grazing land and one for forest land.

Description of annual performance measures:

- Grazing land with conservation practices applied to protect the resource base. This measure includes land on which a conservation system or practice is applied with NRCS technical assistance and/or financial assistance. The conservation applied includes a wide range of practices tailored to the resource conditions and producer's operation and goals on the specific site. This measure is acres (in millions) of grazing land on which conservation practices have been applied to protect the resource base.

Key Outcome 6: Healthy Plant and Animal Communities (Forest Land Ecosystems) - Healthy forest lands that are productive, diverse, and resilient and provide a wide range of ecosystem services.

Healthy, vigorous plant communities on forest lands protect soil quality, prevent soil erosion, provide fiber, improve water quality, provide diverse habitat for wildlife, and sequester carbon. Sustaining healthy forest ecosystems is achieved by focusing on interacting relationships between plant and animal species within a given ecosystem and their relationship to the physical features and processes of their environment. NRCS provides data and technical and financial assistance to people interested in creating, restoring, protecting and enhancing forest lands.

Long Term Performance Measure:

- Improve the health and productive capacity of private forest land.

Target: By 2015, non-industrial private forest landowners will apply management that will maintain or improve vegetative condition and protect and enhance ecosystem services on 9 million acres of non-industrial private forest land that are considered to have minimal or degrading vegetative conditions.
Baseline: In 2003, about 200 million acres of non-industrial private forest land were considered to be in minimal or degrading vegetative condition due to overstocking, invasive species, wildfire damage, insects, hurricane damage, or other factors.

Key Performance Targets:

Performance Measure	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
Forest land with conservation applied to protect and improve vegetative condition, acres						
CO-CTA	NA	NA	NA	636,589	600,000	575,000
EQIP	NA	NA	NA	807,766	700,000	700,000

Note: Starting in FY2010, the former performance measure that covered grazing land and forest land has been split into two distinct measures, one for grazing land and one for forest land.

Description of annual performance measures:

- Forest land with conservation applied to protect and improve vegetative condition. This measure includes non-industrial private forest land on which a conservation system or practice is applied with NRCS technical assistance and/or financial assistance. The conservation applied includes a wide range of practices tailored to the resource conditions and producer's operation and goals on the specific site. The measure is acres of non-industrial private forest actively managed with conservation practices that protect and improve vegetative condition.

Key Outcome 7: Healthy Plant and Animal Communities (Fish and Wildlife Habitat) - Working lands and waters provide habitat for diverse and healthy wildlife, aquatic species, and plant communities.

Privately-owned and other non-Federal lands provide habitat for much of the Nation's wildlife. Protecting specific ecosystems and landscapes — including wetlands, grasslands, floodplains, and certain types of forests — can help support wildlife and aquatic species and provide benefits in the form of recreation, hunting, and other forms of agri-tourism. NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to maintain and enhance fish and wildlife habitat on non-Federal lands.

Long-Term Performance Measures:

- Improve wildlife lands on agricultural lands.

Target: By 2015, farmers, ranchers, and non-industrial private forest landowners will implement conservation measures to improve an additional 8.5 million acres of essential habitat to benefit at-risk or declining species.
Baseline: In 2005, farmers, ranchers, and other landowners and managers improved habitat for declining and at-risk species on 2 million acres.

Key Performance Targets

Performance Measure	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
Non-Federal land with conservation applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality, acres*						
CO-CTA	10,771,278	10,985,276	9,793,927	10,279,912	8,000,000	8,500,000
EQIP	4,825,631	4,820,717	5,171,183	6,018,922	6,000,000	6,000,000
WHIP	388,769	316,896	335,402	876,895	1,000,000	900,000

* Measure definition changed to better reflect beneficial effects of conservation practices on wildlife. Select list expanded from three to seventeen conservation practices. All provide documented benefits to wildlife.

Description of annual performance measures:

- Non-Federal land with conservation applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality. The rural landscape provides critical habitat, food and safety for much of the Nation's wildlife. Many of the conservation practices that farmers and ranchers apply to cropland and grazing land improves the habitat those lands provide for wildlife. The measure is acres of non-Federal land actively managed with conservation practices that protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat.

Key Outcome 8: Healthy Plant and Animal Communities (Wetlands) - Wetlands provide high quality habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife, protect water quality, and reduce flood damage.

Wetlands provide wildlife habitat, protect and improve water quality, attenuate water flows due to flooding, and recharge ground water. NRCS will help protect and improve wetland resources by supporting voluntary incentive-based approaches to wetland restoration, making wetland determinations, and conducting wetland compliance reviews.

Long-Term Performance Measures:

- Increase wetland acreage on private working lands.

Target: By 2015, farmers and ranchers will create, restore, or enhance an additional 1.25 million acres of wetlands on non-Federal lands.
Baseline: In 2003, there were 111 million wetland acres on non-Federal lands in the contiguous United States.

Key Performance Targets

Performance Measure	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
Wetlands created, restored or enhanced, acres						
CO-CTA	62,093	72,806	67,233	65,797	51,300	51,300
WRP	149,330	128,860	106,379	129,062	125,000	140,000
Farmland, forest land, and wetlands protected by conservation easements, acres						
WRP	74,509	56,117	35,338	74,180	75,000	75,000

Description of annual performance measures:

- Wetlands created, restored or enhanced. Wetlands provide fish and wildlife habitat, reduce flooding, recharge groundwater, protect biological diversity, and improve water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals. This measure reports acres on which conservation practices have been applied to meet criteria in local field office technical guides. It includes only acres on which conservation was completed in a given fiscal year. It includes the wetland acres treated but not any associated upland acres treated or placed under easement to protect the wetland itself. It is, therefore, a more precise measure of changes in wetlands acreage than measures that include wetlands and associated uplands.
- Farmland, forest land, and wetlands protected by conservation easements. This measure reports on acres enrolled under permanent and 30-year easements registered at the courthouse during the specified fiscal year. This measure reflects wetland acreage only; however WRP protects these wetlands by also placing associated upland acreage under easement.

High Priority Performance Goals: Accelerate the protection of clean, abundant water resources by implementing high impact targeted (HIT)[1] practices on a total (FY 2010 & 2011, CTA+EQIP) of 22,000 acres of National Forest and private working lands in priority landscapes for FY 2011, the second year of a two year USDA pilot project. The priority landscapes are within the USDA designated Priority Watersheds of National Importance: Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, and Mississippi River basins and the California Bay Delta. For more information go to: http://www.performance.gov/

Performance Measure	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
Wetlands created, restored or enhanced in priority landscapes, acres						
CO-CTA	NA	NA	NA	2,650	2,700	2,600
WRP	NA	NA	NA	8,527	8,500	9,000

[1] High Impact Targeted (HIT) Practices are specifically designed to create, restore or enhance wetland areas. Example: restoration of a prior converted wetland to its pre-conversion hydrology and function.

Goal: USDA will help America promote agricultural production and biotechnology exports as America works to increase food security.

Key Outcome 2: Clean and Abundant Water (Water Quality) - The quality of surface water and groundwater is improved and maintained to protect human health, support a healthy environment, and enable productive use of the land.
Water running off or infiltrating the ground from agricultural operations can carry a number of potential pollutants into streams, lakes, groundwater, and estuaries. States and Tribes have identified sediment and nutrients as the most extensive agricultural contaminants affecting surface water quality; nutrients and agrichemicals are the major concerns for groundwater. NRCS sets long-term targets for reducing sediment and nutrients to move from agricultural operations. Long-term measures are supported by annual measures for application of conservation practices that reduce erosion and runoff and movement of nutrients.

Long-term Performance Measures:

- Reduce sediment delivery from agricultural operations.
  Target: By 2015, sediment delivery from agricultural operations will be reduced by an additional 37.5 million tons.
  Baseline: In FY 2003, sediment delivery from agricultural operations was 970 million tons.

- Reduce nitrogen delivery from agricultural operations.
  Target: By 2015, delivery of nitrogen from agricultural operations will be reduced by an additional 215,000 tons.
  Baseline: In FY 2003, annual nitrogen delivery from agricultural operations was an estimated 6 million tons.

- Reduce phosphorus delivery from agricultural operations.
  Target: By 2015, delivery of phosphorus from agricultural operations will be reduced by an additional 37,500 tons.
  Baseline: In FY 2003, annual phosphorus delivery from agricultural operations was an estimated 360,000 tons.

Key Performance Targets

Performance Measure	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 Target	FY 2012 Target
Technical documents prepared and transferred to customers, number						
CO-Plant Materials	459	435	436	329	300	300

Description of annual performance measures:

- Plant materials technical documents written and released to the public. Plants and plant technologies are important tools to meet evolving natural resource conservation needs. This measure tracks the number of technical documents that are developed and made available to internal and external customers to enable effective use of plants developed by NRCS.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
Full Cost by Departmental Strategic Goal

Assist rural communities to create prosperity so they are self-sustaining, repopulating, and economically thriving.

PROGRAM	PROGRAM ITEMS		AMOUNT ($000) FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Snow Survey & Water Supply Forecasting					
	Natural Resource Inventory and Assessment		3,746	3,746	3,746
	Indirect Costs		1,737	1,737	1,737
		Total Costs	5,482	5,482	5,482
		FTEs	33	39	35
	Performance measure: Water supply forecasts issued				
	Performance, number		12,400	12,400	12,400
Flood Prevention Operations P.L. 78-534					
	Conservation Planning and Technical Consultation		25	25	-
	Conservation Implementation		62	62	-
	Financial Assistance-Program Administration		4	4	-
	Financial Assistance - Cost Share & Monetary Incentives		2,058	2,058	-
	Indirect Costs		425	425	-
		Total Costs	2,573	2,573	-
		FTEs	2	17	-
	Performance measure: Flood prevention or mitigation measures installed				
	Performance, number		3	3	-
Watershed Operations P.L. 83-566					
	Conservation Planning and Technical Consultation		387	387	-
	Conservation Implementation		1,852	1,852	-
	Financial Assistance-Program Administration		136	136	-
	Financial Assistance - Cost Share & Monetary Incentives		8,911	8,911	-
	Indirect Costs		1,142	1,142	-
		Total Costs	12,427	12,427	-
		FTEs	14	44	-
	Performance measure: Flood prevention or mitigation measures installed				
	Performance, number		79	60	-
Emergency Watershed Protection Program					
	Conservation Implementation		0	0	-
	Financial Assistance-Program Administration		0	0	-
	Financial Assistance - Cost Share & Monetary Incentives		0	0	-
	Indirect Costs		0	0	-
		Total Costs	0	0	-
		FTEs	35	28	-
Resource Conservation & Development					
	Conservation Planning and Technical Consultation		21,364	21,364	-
	Conservation Implementation		19,355	19,355	-
	Indirect Costs		10,011	10,011	-
		Total Costs	50,730	50,730	-
		FTEs	403	423	-
	Performance measure: Jobs created or retained in rural communities through effective natural resource and community planning efforts				
	Performance, number		8,762	8,000	-
Discretionary Total					
		Total Costs	71,212	71,212	5,482
		FTEs	486	551	35
Agency Total					
		Total Costs	71,212	71,212	5,482
		FTEs	487	551	35

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
Full Cost by Departmental Strategic Goal

Ensure our national forests and private working lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while enhancing our water resources.

PROGRAM	PROGRAM ITEMS		AMOUNT ($000) FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Conservation Technical Assistance					
	Conservation Planning and Technical Consultation		185,138	185,138	187,538
	Conservation Implementation		101,465	101,465	102,781
	Natural Resource Inventory and Assessment		12,810	12,810	12,976
	Natural Resource Technology Transfer		81,305	81,305	82,359
	Indirect Costs		391,919	391,919	397,001
		Total Costs	772,637	772,637	782,655
		FTEs	5,352	5,500	5,050
	Performance measure: Priority landscapes with high impact targeted conservation practices applied to improve water quality				
	Performance, acres		1,943,355	2,000,000	1,800,000
	Performance measure: Comprehensive nutrient management plans applied				
	Performance, number		1,349	1,350	1,350
	Performance measure: Land with conservation applied to improve irrigation efficiency				
	Performance, acres		758,036	775,000	775,000
	Performance measure: Priority landscapes with high impact targeted conservation practices applied to improve irrigation efficiency				
	Performance, acres		83,740	100,000	80,000
	Performance measure: Cropland with conservation applied to improve soil quality				
	Performance, million acres		8.2	7.7	7.3
	Performance measure: Grazing land with conservation applied to protect the resource base				
	Performance, million acres		17.0	15.0	14.5
	Performance measure: Forest land with conservation applied to protect and improve vegetative condition				
	Performance, acres		636,589	600,000	575,000
	Performance measure: Non-Federal land with conservation applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality				
	Performance, acres		10,279,912	8,000,000	8,500,000
	Performance measure: Wetlands created, restored or enhanced				
	Performance, acres		65,797	51,300	51,300
	Performance measure: Wetlands created, restored or enhanced in priority landscapes				
	Performance, acres		2,650	2,700	2,600

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
Full Cost by Departmental Strategic Goal

Ensure our national forests and private working lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while enhancing our water resources.

PROGRAM	PROGRAM ITEMS		AMOUNT ($000) FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Soil Survey					
	Natural Resource Inventory and Assessment		47,592	47,592	47,592
	Natural Resource Technology Transfer		12,310	12,310	12,310
	Indirect Costs		34,037	34,037	34,037
		Total Costs	93,939	93,939	93,939
		FTEs	676	679	651
	Performance measure: Soil surveys mapped or updated				
	Performance: million acres		38.8	36.5	36.0
Snow Survey & Water Supply Forecasting					
	Natural Resource Inventory and Assessment		3,746	3,746	3,746
	Indirect Costs		1,737	1,737	1,737
		Total Costs	5,483	5,483	5,483
		FTEs	32	39	34
	Performance measure: Water supply forecasts accuracy				
	Performance, index		0.58	0.58	0.58
Plant Materials Centers					
	Natural Resource Inventory and Assessment		673	673	673
	Natural Resource Technology Transfer		2,328	2,328	2,328
	Indirect Costs		2,544	2,544	2,544
		Total Costs	5,544	5,544	5,544
		FTEs	49	46	46
	Performance measure: New plant materials released to commercial growers				
	Performance, number		11	7	7
Flood Prevention Operations P.L. 78-534					
	Conservation Planning and Technical Consultation		25	25	-
	Conservation Implementation		62	62	-
	Financial Assistance-Program Administration		4	4	-
	Financial Assistance - Cost Share & Monetary Incentives		2,058	2,058	-
	Indirect Costs		425	425	-
		Total Costs	2,573	2,573	-
		FTEs	3	16	-
	Performance measure: Long-term contracts completed during the fiscal year (all measures installed) for the purpose of water quality improvement				
	Performance, number		34	-	-
Watershed Operations P.L. 83-566					
	Conservation Planning and Technical Consultation		387	387	-
	Conservation Implementation		1,852	1,852	-
	Financial Assistance-Program Administration		136	136	-
	Financial Assistance - Cost Share & Monetary Incentives		8,911	8,911	-
	Indirect Costs		1,142	1,142	-
		Total Costs	12,427	12,427	-
		FTEs	14	43	-
	Performance measure: Long-term contracts completed during the fiscal year (all measures installed) for the purpose of water quality improvement				
	Performance, number		111	99	-

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
Full Cost by Departmental Strategic Goal

Ensure our national forests and private working lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while enhancing our water resources.

PROGRAM	PROGRAM ITEMS		AMOUNT ($000) FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Emergency Watershed Protection Program					
	Conservation Implementation		0	0	-
	Financial Assistance-Program Administration		0	0	-
	Financial Assistance - Cost Share & Monetary Incentives		0	0	-
	Indirect Costs		0	0	-
		Total Costs	0	0	-
		FTEs	105	85	-
Watershed Rehabilitation Program					
	Conservation Planning and Technical Consultation		1,994	1,368	-
	Conservation Implementation		7,008	4,805	-
	Financial Assistance-Program Administration		806	553	-
	Financial Assistance - Cost Share & Monetary Incentives		22,961	28,365	-
	Indirect Costs		7,392	5,070	-
		Total Costs	40,161	40,161	-
		FTEs	82	71	-
	Performance measure: Unsafe dams rehabilitated or removed				
	Performance, number		11	17	-
	Performance measure: Dams with watershed rehabilitation plans authorized				
	Performance, number		20	-	-
Discretionary Total					
		Total Costs	932,764	932,764	887,621
		FTEs	6,313	6,479	5,782

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
Full Cost by Departmental Strategic Goal

Ensure our national forests and private working lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while enhancing our water resources.

PROGRAM	PROGRAM ITEMS		AMOUNT ($000) FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Wetlands Reserve Program					
	Conservation Planning and Technical Consultation		2,558	3,807	4,044
	Conservation Implementation		13,764	20,482	21,759
	Financial Assistance - Program Administration		12,106	18,015	19,138
	Financial Assistance - Cost Share & Monetary Incentives		594,219	672,647	728,007
	Indirect Costs		7,492	11,148	11,844
		Total Costs	630,139	726,099	784,792
		FTEs	217	343	363
	Performance measure: Wetlands created, restored or enhanced				
	Performance, acres		129,062	125,000	140,000
	Performance measure: Wetlands created, restored or enhanced in priority landscapes				
	Performance, acres		8,527	8,500	9,000
	Performance measure: Farmland, forest land, and wetlands protected by conservation easements				
	Performance, acres		74,180	75,000	75,000
Environmental Quality Incentives Program					
	Conservation Planning and Technical Consultation		20,429	22,277	26,149
	Conservation Implementation		105,837	115,411	135,469
	Financial Assistance - Program Administration		71,051	77,479	90,944
	Financial Assistance - Cost Share & Monetary Incentives		856,697	833,950	1,001,809
	Indirect Costs		120,025	130,883	153,629
		Total Costs	1,174,039	1,180,000	1,408,000
		FTEs	2,407	2,872	3,374
	Performance measure: Priority landscapes with high impact targeted conservation practices applied to improve water quality				
	Performance, acres		761,582	775,000	800,000
	Performance measure: Comprehensive nutrient management plans applied				
	Performance, number		1,739	1,500	1,500
	Performance measure: Land with conservation applied to improve irrigation efficiency				
	Performance, acres		967,495	1,000,000	1,200,000
	Performance measure: Priority landscapes with high impact targeted conservation practices applied to improve irrigation efficiency				
	Performance, acres		76,024	85,000	100,000
	Performance measure: Cropland with conservation applied to improve soil quality				
	Performance, million acres		4.8	4.8	4.8
	Performance measure: Non-Federal land with conservation applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality				
	Performance, acres		6,018,922	6,000,000	6,000,000
	Performance measure: Grazing land with conservation applied to protect the resource base				
	Performance, million acres		16.7	15.0	15.5
	Performance measure: Forest land with conservation applied to protect and improve vegetative condition				
	Performance, acres		807,766	700,000	700,000

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
Full Cost by Departmental Strategic Goal

Ensure our national forests and private working lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while enhancing our water resources.

PROGRAM	PROGRAM ITEMS		AMOUNT ($000) FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Grasslands Reserve Program					
	Conservation Planning and Technical Consultation		2,047	5,880	4,007
	Conservation Implementation		846	2,430	1,656
	Financial Assistance - Program Administration		3,281	9,425	6,423
	Financial Assistance - Cost Share & Monetary Incentives		93,408	98,126	54,090
	Indirect Costs		526	1,512	1,030
		Total Costs	100,108	117,373	67,206
		FTEs	28	55	44
	Performance measure: Farmland and grazing lands protected by conservation easements				
	Performance, acres		26,016	25,000	25,000
Agricultural Water Enhancement Program					
	Conservation Planning and Technical Consultation		1,257	3,757	2,455
	Conservation Implementation		4,367	13,052	8,529
	Financial Assistance - Program Administration		3,075	9,190	6,005
	Financial Assistance - Cost Share & Monetary Incentives		60,813	40,087	37,840
	Indirect Costs		2,648	7,914	5,171
		Total Costs	72,160	74,000	60,000
		FTEs	65	223	147
	Performance measure: Land with conservation applied to improve irrigation efficiency				
	Performance, acres		93,945	75,000	55,000
	Performance measure: Land with conservation applied to improve water quality				
	Performance, acres		117,831	90,000	75,000
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program					
	Conservation Planning and Technical Consultation		2,733	2,769	2,676
	Conservation Implementation		5,817	5,893	5,696
	Financial Assistance - Program Administration		6,989	7,080	6,843
	Financial Assistance - Cost Share & Monetary Incentives		62,602	64,412	53,100
	Indirect Costs		4,785	4,846	4,685
		Total Costs	82,926	85,000	73,000
		FTEs	126	150	145
	Performance measure: Non-Federal land with conservation applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality				
	Performance, acres		876,895	1,000,000	900,000
Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program					
	Financial Assistance - Program Administration		336	460	513
	Conservation Implementation		18	25	28
	Financial Assistance - Program Administration		3,830	5,248	5,852
	Financial Assistance-Cost Share & Monetary Incentives		144,042	166,978	191,055
	Indirect Costs		1,670	2,289	2,552
		Total Costs	149,896	175,000	200,000
		FTEs	29	44	49
	Performance measure: Prime, unique, and important farmland protected from conversion to non-agricultural uses by conservation easements				
	Performance, acres		53,898	45,000	45,000

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PROGRAM	PROGRAM ITEMS		AMOUNT ($000) FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Conservation Security Program					
	Conservation Planning and Technical Consultation		941	990	965
	Conservation Implementation		1,233	1,297	1,264
	Financial Assistance - Program Administration		4,947	5,205	5,074
	Financial Assistance - Cost Share & Monetary Incentives		199,928	182,468	176,674
	Indirect Costs		15,120	13,446	13,108
		Total Costs	222,169	203,406	197,085
		FTEs	154	132	127
	Performance measure: Cropland that uses management practices to reduce nitrogen loading to surface and groundwater				
	Performance, million acres		0.8	0.6	0.6
Conservation Stewardship Program					
	Conservation Planning and Technical Consultation		2,939	3,356	3,545
	Conservation Implementation		3,849	4,397	4,644
	Financial Assistance - Program Administration		15,440	17,645	18,638
	Financial Assistance - Cost Share & Monetary Incentives		320,398	529,855	712,667
	Indirect Costs		47,187	45,581	48,145
		Total Costs	389,813	600,834	787,639
		FTEs	496	540	557
	Performance measure: Under development				
	Performance,		TBD	TBD	TBD
Agricultural Management Assistance					
	Conservation Planning and Technical Consultation		147	212	151
	Conservation Implementation		457	659	471
	Financial Assistance - Program Administration		433	624	446
	Financial Assistance - Cost Share & Monetary Incentives		6,048	5,767	1,262
	Indirect Costs		165	238	170
		Total Costs	7,250	7,500	2,500
		FTEs	12	33	23
	Performance measure: Land with conservation applied to improve irrigation efficiency				
	Performance, acres		5,018	8,000	6,000

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
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PROGRAM	PROGRAM ITEMS		AMOUNT ($000) FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Healthy Forests Reserve Program					
	Conservation Planning and Technical Consultation		187	301	340
	Conservation Implementation		398	641	725
	Financial Assistance - Program Administration		478	770	870
	Financial Assistance - Cost Share & Monetary Incentives		6,226	7,509	7,217
	Indirect Costs		328	529	598
		Total Costs	7,617	9,750	9,750
		FTEs	6	23	15
	Performance measure: Non-Federal land with conservation applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality				
	Performance, acres		-	3,000	2,400
Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program					
	Conservation Planning and Technical Consultation		676	1,234	1,417
	Conservation Implementation		3,501	6,393	7,340
	Financial Assistance - Program Administration		2,350	4,292	4,928
	Financial Assistance - Cost Share & Monetary Incentives		33,539	52,830	27,991
	Indirect Costs		3,970	7,251	8,324
		Total Costs	44,036	72,000	50,000
		FTEs	85	172	197
	Performance measure: Land with conservation applied to improve water quality				
	Performance, acres		94,088	125,000	145,000
Conservation Reserve Program					
	Conservation Planning and Technical Consultation		12,335	25,679	25,679
	Conservation Implementation		18,367	38,237	38,237
	Financial Assistance - Program Administration		18,639	38,803	38,803
	Financial Assistance - Cost Share & Monetary Incentives		-	-	-
	Indirect Costs		10,222	21,281	21,281
		Total Costs	59,563	124,000	124,000
		FTEs	529	1,158	1,159
Mandatory Total					
		Total Costs	2,939,716	3,374,962	3,763,972
		FTEs	4,154	5,745	6,200
Agency Total					
		Total Costs	3,872,481	4,307,726	4,651,593
		FTEs	10,467	12,224	11,982

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
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PROGRAM	PROGRAM ITEMS		AMOUNT ($000) FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Help America promote agricultural production and biotechnology exports as America works to increase food security.					
Plant Materials Centers					
	Natural Resource Inventory and Assessment		673	673	673
	Natural Resource Technology Transfer		2,328	2,328	2,328
	Indirect Costs		2,544	2,544	2,544
		Total Costs	5,544	5,544	5,544
		FTEs	49	46	45
	Performance measure: Technical documents prepared and transferred to customers				
	Performance, number		329	300	300
Discretionary Total					
		Total Costs	5,544	5,544	5,544
		FTEs	49	46	45
Agency Total					
		Total Costs	5,544	5,544	5,544
		FTEs	49	46	45