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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE MARKS 70TH ANNIVERSARY BY HONORING LANDOWNERS, PARTNERS

ST. PAUL, April, 13, 2005—U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Minnesota will recognize landowners and partners, including the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) for protecting the state's natural resources during an Open House to celebrate 70 years of conservation achievements, said State Conservationist William Hunt.

The Open House will be held Wednesday, April 27 from 9:00am to 4:00pm as part of the agency's nationwide effort to mark seven decades of conserving natural resources on private and tribal land. The anniversary's theme, "A Partner in Conservation Since 1935," reflects the agency's mission—providing leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.

Conservation practices carried out by farmers, ranchers and other landowners in Minnesota have improved the quality of life and built stronger rural communities. Our food supply, water and air have improved tremendously. Agency statistics have shown dramatic improvements in the Minnesota's natural resources that have resulted from the use of conservation practices such as crop rotations, terraces and contour farming.

As a result, NRCS will recognize landowners, employees and partners—all of whom have played a vital role in helping the agency accomplish its mission.

"This agency's rich conservation legacy has resulted in many benefits to the state's citizens—abundant food and fiber, clean water, pure air, productive soils and open spaces to use and enjoy," Hunt said.

NRCS was created as the Soil Conservation Service within USDA on April 27, 1935 in response to the devastation of the Dust Bowl on the nation's agricultural land. The agency's primary mission then was to conserve soil on agricultural land. It became NRCS in 1994 to better reflect its expanded role of servicing other natural resources such as soil, water, air, plants, and animals on private and tribal lands.

For more information about NRCS in Minnesota, please visit <http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov>.