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2007 USDA EQIP Funding Announcement for the Driftless Area of the Upper Mississippi River Basin

ALTURA, Minn., April 23, 2007- Christina Muedeking, Regional Assistant Chief for the Central Region of the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), announced today that an additional \$1.4 million dollars of Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) funding will be allocated to the Driftless Area. EQIP is a voluntary Farm Bill conservation program administered by the USDA NRCS. It supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP land users may receive financial and technical help with structural and management conservation practices on agricultural land

The Driftless Area encompasses a 4-state region of MN, IA, IL and WI. The funding announced by Muedeking will be in addition to \$9.2 million of original EQIP allocation that went into the Driftless Area Region. The Driftless Area is a unique region that encompasses nearly 24,000 square miles of the Upper Mississippi River. The land, soils and ecosystems in the Driftless Area is diverse and is home to hundreds of state and federally threatened and endangered animal and plant species.

Muedeking made the announcement during an Earth Day celebration here with Congressman Tim Walz, MN NRCS State Conservationist William Hunt, WI NRCS State Conservationist Pat Leavenworth, and IA NRCS State Conservationist representative Marty Adkins. This year marks the 37th anniversary of Earth Day. Former WI U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson championed the idea of holding Earth Day celebrations throughout the United States. Today's observation carried on with an important tradition of paying attention to the great private landowner and other environmental and conservation organizations accomplishments that are occurring in the Driftless Area Region.

Since the Dust Bowl of the 1930's, NRCS has worked in partnership with local conservation districts and other agencies throughout the U.S. to help landowners, as well as Federal, State, tribal, and local governments and community groups conserve natural resources on private lands.

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