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Date: August 13, 2007

Contact:

[Julie MacSwain](#), State Public Affairs Specialist, (651) 602-7859

CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

SAINT PAUL, Minn., August 13, 2007 –William Hunt, Minnesota NRCS State Conservationist, has announced the release of additional funding for Conservation Security Program (CSP) implementation.

“Through the actions that we have made with CSP we will fully realize the promise to recognize and award those producers that demonstrate conservation excellence,” Hunt said. “These steps represent a way to bring the past program to completion, and set the stage for the future of CSP.”

Funds were made available for the completion of payments on Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 CSP contracts. Specifically, in Minnesota, of the 710 current CSP contracts in Minnesota, 475 were impacted by the Continuing Resolution Limit (CRL). Minnesota received a total obligation of approximately \$8.86 million dollars for FY 2007 payments on contracts approved during FY 2004, 2005, and 2006. Of the \$8.86 million dollars, approximately \$1.56 million was allocated as a result of the supplemental appropriations bill.

The additional national funds are to help producers and Natural Resources Conservation Service field staff prepare for a future program signup in the 51 watersheds previously identified for FY 2007, which includes the Thief Watershed in Minnesota. A list of the eligible watersheds can be viewed at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>. USDA offers CSP in new watersheds annually on a rotational basis in as many watersheds as funding allows. For more information about CSP, including a map of targeted watersheds and eligibility requirements, please visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp>.

CSP is a voluntary program that supports ongoing conservation stewardship on private agricultural working lands and enhances the condition of the nation’s natural resources. Under this program, USDA rewards producers who practice good stewardship on agricultural lands and offers incentives to increase the use of conservation practices. The USDA Farm Bill proposal calls for substantial reform and improvement of the Conservation Security Program with a goal of conducting nationwide signups in the future.

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