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Date: June 11, 2007

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Tribal Consultation Protocol Agreement signed

Carlton, Minn., June 11, 2007—William Hunt, State Conservationist for USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), St Paul, MN., announced today that Minnesota NRCS signed a tribal consultation protocol agreement with the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa at the Black Bear Casino in Carlton, Minnesota. “NRCS recognizes and commits to a government-to-government relationship with American Indian Tribal Governments and we want to ensure that cultural resources, traditional cultural properties and sacred sites, are mutually considered throughout all stages of NRCS conservation activities” said Hunt.

Minnesota NRCS has consulted successfully with several Minnesota tribes on a variety of Projects. Over the last several years, the Fond du Lac Band has worked closely with the Duluth NRCS field office. The main emphasis has been for the restoration of the reservation’s wild rice lakes. The once productive lakes were connected with a judicial ditch system in the early 1900’s in an effort to create dry land farming. With Environmental Quality Incentives Program funds, the NRCS staff assisted the tribe in the construction of structures for water control and for maintaining lake levels associated with native wild rice production.

Additionally, NRCS has worked with the band on projects ranging from controlling erosion on abandoned logging roads, improving wildlife habitat to protecting ground water resources by helping to fund the sealing of abandoned wells.

The signing of today’s Cultural Resources Tribal protocol marks the 5th agreement that has been signed in Minnesota between MN NRCS and a MN tribe. The success of having these agreements signed stems from a two-way exchange of information, a willingness to listen, and an attempt to understand and genuinely consider each others opinions, beliefs, and desired outcomes.

For more information about Minnesota Tribes and Minnesota Cultural Resources go to: www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/ecs/cultural/cultural.html

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