

For Immediate Release      Contact: Julie MacSwain, State Public Affairs Officer 651-602-7859

## **NRCS Announces Water Conservation Project Assistance**

St. Paul, Minnesota, February 3, 2011- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Red River Basin Commission announced today that \$1.9 million is available in financial assistance to Red River Basin projects through the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP). The funds will be administered by the NRCS in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota portions of the Red River Basin.

AWEP projects are implemented by NRCS entering into partnership agreements with eligible entities. NRCS works with these partners to help landowners plan and implement conservation practices in project areas established through the agreements. "The Red River Basin continues to experience huge impacts to its water resources. Through this collaborative project, conservation efforts are aiding to suppress the blow to our communities," said Don A. Baloun, Minnesota NRCS State Conservationist.

Lance Yohe, Red River Basin Commission Executive Director, said "AWEP is a great program that brings additional financial resources to the Red River Basin to solve soil erosion, water quality and flooding problems. It provides a unique opportunity to implement projects that are good for the local landowner and that also provide benefits to others downstream. The Red River Basin funded program also encourages cooperation between the three states so that everyone is seeking solutions from the larger basin perspective."

Funding will help landowners address problems related to erosion, water quality, and flooding. Funds will be used for the following:

- Water retention strategy
- Cover crop strategy
- Beach ridge erosion reduction strategy
- Restricted flow sediment pool strategy
- Stream bank erosion reduction strategy
- Ring dikes and other Environmental Quality Incentives Program strategies

The deadline for applications is February 25, 2011. For more information on the AWEP, contact your local NRCS office at the USDA Service Center.

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