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For Immediate News Release

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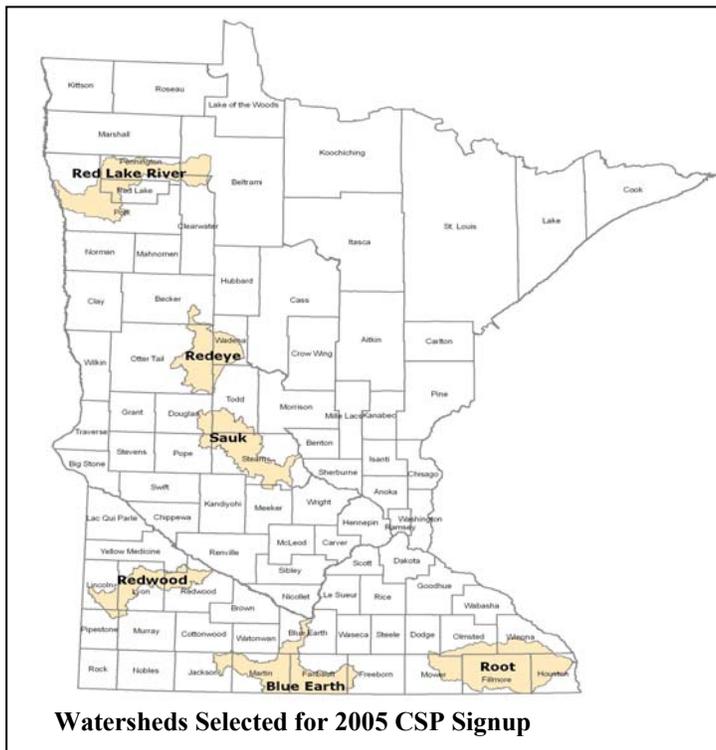
CSP signup underway in six Minnesota watersheds

St. Paul, Minnesota, April 5, 2005 – The 2005 signup for the Conservation Security Program (CSP), a program of the United States Department of Agriculture’s NRCS, began on March 28, 2005 and will continue through May 27, 2005.

CSP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to promote the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes on Tribal and private working land. The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (2002 Farm Bill) (Pub. L. 107-171) amended the Food Security Act of 1985 to authorize the program. CSP is administered by USDA’s NRCS.

Six Minnesota watersheds are among the 220 watersheds selected to participate in the 2005 rollout of the CSP program. Producers may be eligible to receive up to four types of CSP payments: stewardship payments, existing practice payments, new practice payments, and enhancement payments. Interested agricultural producers are encouraged to stop by their local USDA-NRCS field office to obtain additional information about CSP.

To apply, farmers must first complete a CSP Self-Assessment Workbook. The CSP Workbooks and additional information regarding the CSP signup are available at Minnesota NRCS offices in participating watersheds or on the Minnesota NRCS website at: www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/csp.html.



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