

# CSP Subcommittee Update

USDA-NRCS

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## 2008 CSP Sign-up: Thief Watershed

On March 19, 2008, Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer announced a sign-up for CSP starting April 18 and ending May 16, 2008. The sign-up is open to approximately 64,000 potentially eligible participants in 51 watersheds covering more than 23.7 million acres.

The Thief Watershed in Northwest Minnesota is the only watershed eligible for enrollment in Minnesota. The majority of the Thief Watershed is located in Beltrami, Marshall, and Pennington Counties, with a small portion of the watershed in Roseau and Lake of the Woods Counties.

The major changes to CSP for the new sign-up includes the following:

- Nationwide piloting of improved national eligibility tools;

Land Use	Total Acres
Cropland	122,000
Pastureland	16,900
Forestland	276,300
Developed	8,500
Water	19,500
Other	160,400
Total	603,600
Total Number of Potential Participants	560

- The availability of both benchmark and new enhancements at a uniform compensation rate over the contract length; however, participants will not be allowed the opportunity to transition to a higher tier;
- No new practice payments; and
- Priority to Tier II and Tier III applications requesting 5 year contracts.

In past sign-ups each state was allowed to develop a portion of the enhancements; however, for 2008 all enhancements were developed at the national level. All participants, regardless of location, will be eligible for the same enhancements at the same payment rate. We are expecting the contract payment amounts to be less in 2008 than in past sign-ups.

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### Special points of interest:

- The most up to date information regarding CSP is available at the following website:  
[www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/csp.html](http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/csp.html)

For questions regarding CSP or the CSP Subcommittee of the Minnesota NRCS Technical Committee, contact:

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## Local Publicity in the Thief Watershed

The local field offices have launched an inclusive publicity campaign since the sign-up was announced to provide producers with information regarding the sign-up. They mailed out postcards and brochures to producers in the watershed informing them of the sign-up and the dates of the public meetings. CSP posters were distributed to local businesses for posting. They have also submitted news releases to local newspapers and other publications, including the Bemidji Pioneer, Grygla Eagle, Honker News, Middle River Paper, Northern Watch, Roseau Times Region, Stephen Messenger, and Thief River Falls Times. Radio spots and information regarding the producer meetings were emailed to local radio stations, including Bemidji KAXE, Red River Farm Network, and Minnesota Radio News Network. In the week prior to the sign-up, they hosted four public meetings throughout the watershed.