

*Natural Resources Conservation Service Accomplishments – 2001-2005*  
*Providing Historic Increases for Conservation Funding and Protecting Natural Resources*

Bush Administration initiatives for new conservation proposals and efficient implementation of congressionally sponsored legislation have resulted in historic conservation increases at USDA.

America experienced the most significant investment in conservation history by increasing conservation funds 80 percent. More Federal programs focused on helping farmers to conserve and protect wildlife and soil, water and air on working lands.

The 2002 Farm Bill provided a \$17.1 billion increase over 10 years. This funding, combined with the Bush Administration's commitment to private land owners and working lands conservation, will yield significant positive environmental benefits.

***Conservation Accomplishments:***

- **Record Funding Levels for Private Lands Conservation** – Since President Bush signed the 2002 Farm Bill, nearly \$3.5 billion has been provided in mandatory funding for conservation programs. \$1.6 billion has been allocated for fiscal year 2005 funding for conservation programs on working lands.
- **Conservation Security Program** -- USDA now offers CSP in every state and the Caribbean Area. In its second year of operation, 12,700 contracts were signed covering nearly 10 million acres of private agricultural land in 220 watersheds around the country. That is 5.7 percent of the potential eligible operations and over 12 percent of the eligible land came into the program in its second year. More than 200 watersheds, covering over 208,000 farms and 83.2 million acres have been selected for the 2005 sign-up, scheduled for this spring. This is a significant increase compared to the 18 watersheds in 22 states covering 1.9 million acres for the fiscal year 2004 program sign-up.
- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program** – Nearly \$2.3 billion reached 103,000 producers through this flagship conservation program. More than 51 million acres have been enrolled and more than 3,000 comprehensive nutrient management systems have been applied.
- **Wetlands Reserve Program** – President Bush's wetlands initiative to improve, restore and protect three million acres in five years demonstrates his commitment to preserving wetland and wildlife habitats. Since 2001, more than 600,000 acres have been enrolled through WRP.
  - \$26 million was provided to the Lower Missouri River in Nebraska to enhance the state's wetland restoration efforts.
  - Minnesota received a three-year, \$16.2 million plan, protecting more than 7,250 acres.
- **Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program** -- \$232 million was invested to purchase over 360,000 acres for conservation easements to protect farm and ranch lands from conversion to nonagricultural uses. These Federal funds were matched by \$483 million by State and local funds.
- **Disaster Assistance** -- \$500 million in disaster assistance helped restore farmland and forests. NRCS invested \$250 million through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP).
  - In FY 04, \$150 million in EWP funding was provided for southern California wildfire recovery efforts and addressed the tree mortality emergency in Los Angeles, Riverside, San Diego, San Bernardino and Ventura counties.
  - Nearly \$200 million was provided to help hurricane recovery efforts in Florida and other states.

- Klamath –\$50 million was committed to producers in the Klamath Basin in Oregon and California through the 2002 Farm Bill. Nearly \$28 million has been allocated for the Klamath Basin through FY 04. With these funds, NRCS helps farmers and ranchers develop conservation plans that address natural resource concerns, including conserving water and managing nutrients, pests and invasive plant species.
  - More than 167,000 of acres of conservation systems have been designed.
  - Water management plans have been developed on 71,000 acres.
  - Practices have been applied on 15,100 acres.
  - Salmon Habitat Restoration -- \$3.5 million provided for new initiative to help restore and conserve salmon habitat in Alaska, California, Maine, Oregon and Washington.
- 
- **Conservation Innovation Grants** – NRCS provided \$14.2 million for the first Conservation Innovation Grants to explore new ways to deliver conservation.
  - **Earth Team** – NRCS’ Earth Team Volunteer Program donated more than one million hours of service annually to conservation activities. Volunteers worked on thousands of conservation projects including streambank restoration; clean-up of rivers, streams, and lakes; and outdoor classroom development.
  - **Technical Service Providers (TSPs)** – NRCS certified more than 2,000 TSPs to help the agency meet rising workload demands.
  - **E-Gov Initiative** – NRCS supported the President’s Management Initiative by establishing an award-winning accountability system and expanding the use of e-Gov to help the agency deliver working lands conservation.
  - **Bobwhite Quail Habitat Restoration** – NRCS provided \$1.2 million for work in nine states to support the Bobwhite Quail Habitat Restoration Initiative by working in partnership with local and Federal partners.