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# News Release

Release No.: 000015.14

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## **First Participants in Conservation Stewardship Program Can Renew for Five More Years**

ATHENS, GA, July 8, 2014 – The first participants of the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) have from July 11 until Sept. 12 to renew their contracts and make decisions on additional conservation activities that will benefit priority natural resource issues.

CSP is offered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service and is the Farm Bill program that helps farmers and ranchers take conservation investments to the next level.

About 20,000 CSP contracts are reaching the end of their initial five-year contract period and may be renewed for an additional five years where participants agree to take additional conservation measures.

The program provides opportunities for farmers and ranchers who are already established conservation stewards, helping them improve water quality, soil health and wildlife habitat.

“CSP farmers are conservation leaders and go the extra mile to conserve our nation’s resources,” NRCS Acting State Conservationist Tansel Hudson said. “The 2014 Farm Bill continued that strong commitment and heightened the program’s focus on generating conservation benefits.”

Since CSP began in 2009, more than 58 million acres have been enrolled in the program – an area the size of Indiana and Wisconsin combined. CSP participants boost their operations’ conservation benefits by installing new conservation activities that make positive changes in soil, water, air and wildlife habitat.

“This program allows landowners to reach the next level of conservation and opens the door to trying new conservation activities and break traditions, which aren’t always easy to do,” Hudson said.

Mark Vickers in Coffee County said in a March 2011 Success Story, “I use to spend spring dragging soil back from the edges of my fields to fill in all the gullies, but after converting to conservation tillage, I eliminated the erosion problem. Not only did I eliminate the erosion,

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but also increased my soil quality & improved the water holding capacity of the soil.” Vickers went on to say, “My motivation is always to improve my farm, especially environmentally. God has provided us with all the resources we need and in return we should be appreciative enough to be good stewards to protect those resources. CSP has rewarded me for my efforts and I am appreciative of that.”

To learn about technical and financial assistance available through CSP, visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted>, the [Conservation Stewardship webpage](#) or local USDA service center. For more on the 2014 Farm Bill, visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/FarmBill>.

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