

For Immediate Release  
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**OREGON'S UMATILLA WATERSHED SELECTED FOR 2004 CSP SIGN-UP**  
**Oregon NRCS to hold Informational Sessions for Interested Producers**

Pendleton, May 19, 2004- The Umatilla watershed in north central Oregon has been selected as one of the nation's 18 priority watersheds that will be used in the fiscal year 2004 Conservation Security Program (CSP) sign-up to be held this summer, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service announced today.

"The selection of the Umatilla watershed in this first sign-up represents a balance of resource needs, historic stewardship, potential producer eligibility, and the technology and adequate staff needed to successfully implement the program," said NRCS State Conservationist Bob Graham. "Nationally, the selected watersheds reflect a cross-section of land uses, crop regions and landscapes that will test the basic concepts in NRCS' newest conservation program," he said.

The Oregon Natural Resources Conservation Service will be holding CSP informational meetings for producers in the Umatilla Watershed from June 16th through the 23rd. Producers who have land within the watershed should plan to attend one of the seven informational meetings for additional details about CSP and producer eligibility. A list of meeting dates and cities is provided below.

"A sign-up announcement will be published along with the interim final rule that will detail the specific program requirements within the priority watersheds," Graham said.

Nationally, the fiscal year 2004 CSP budget of \$41.4 million will allow NRCS to write 3,000 to 5,000 contracts. The contracts will be determined in a national selection process that will be described in the sign-up notice.

According to Graham all CSP applications that meet the sign-up criteria will be placed in an enrollment category and considered regardless of available funding.

"Agricultural producers in the Umatilla watershed have been protecting our soil and water resources for years," Graham said. "Now they will be rewarded for that stewardship, and will become the models for future CSP participants. It's a bright new day for conservation and I'm delighted we're a part of this exciting first sign-up," he said.

CSP is a voluntary program that supports ongoing conservation stewardship of agricultural working lands and enhances the condition of America's natural resources. Additional information on CSP, including the Federal Register notices, public comments and frequently asked questions, is at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp>.

## **CSP Informational Meetings**

June 16 - 10:00 a.m.

Pendleton

Pendleton Convention Center

June 16 - 2:00 p.m.

Mission

Tamastlikt Cultural Institute (TCI)

June 17 - 1:00 p.m.

Pilot Rock

White Eagle Grange

June 17 - 7:00 p.m.

Hermiston

Hermiston Community Center

June 22 - 1:00 p.m.

Athena

Athena Grade School (tentative)

June 22 - 6:00 p.m.

Helix

Helix City Hall (tentative)

June 23 - 1:00 p.m.

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Location to be announced

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