

Media Contact:

Sara Magenheimer 503-414-3250

Bill White 503-414-3085

February 1, 2006**Agriculture Secretary Announces Sign-up for 2006 Conservation Security Program
In Oregon***CSP sign-up to run from February 13, 2006 - March 31, 2006*

(PORTLAND, OREGON), Feb. 1, 2006 — Oregon's best conservation stewards in the Upper Klamath Lake and Upper Grande Ronde watersheds now have the opportunity to sign-up for the USDA's Conservation Security Program (CSP) Feb. 13, 2006 through March 31, 2006, according to USDA Secretary Mike Johanns.

CSP is a voluntary program with the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that supports ongoing stewardship of private, agricultural working lands and rewards those producers who are meeting the highest standards of conservation and environmental management on their operation.

"NRCS is committed to providing a fair and equitable program that rewards Oregon's leading conservationists," said Oregon NRCS State Conservationist Bob Graham. "This year, applicants can sign up prior to most planting decisions. We see this as a way to encourage more conservation leaders to apply for the program."

USDA announced preliminary selection of 110 watersheds for fiscal year 2006 based on the President's budget request. Due to the available funding provided through the appropriations process, CSP will be offered nationally in 60 watersheds across all 50 states, the Caribbean and Guam. In Oregon, the Upper Grande Ronde and Upper Klamath Lake watersheds have been selected to participate in this CSP sign-up. The sign-up will only include those producers who do not have an existing CSP contract.

Producers with the majority of their land inside the Upper Klamath Lake or Upper Grande Ronde watershed boundaries have met the first criteria for CSP eligibility. Those interested in participating will need to fill out a self-assessment, which can be found on the Web at <http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov> (click on Conservation Security Program) or in hard copy at USDA Service Centers within the selected watersheds.

NRCS Service Centers throughout the selected watersheds will be holding CSP informational workshops. Producers who have land in the watershed should plan to attend one of the information meetings for additional details regarding CSP and producer eligibility. A complete list of informational workshop dates will be placed on <http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov> as they are scheduled. Workshop dates are also listed below.

The meeting will cover:

- What is CSP?
- How can I apply for the program?
- Who is eligible for CSP?
- What are the benefits of CSP?
- What are the requirements of CSP?

Land in this year's selected watersheds may not be eligible again for at least eight years, so attending a workshop is important for those interested in applying for CSP.

2006 marks the third CSP sign-up. The privately-owned land currently enrolled in CSP covers nearly 11 million acres in 220 eligible watersheds in all 50 states and the Caribbean Area.

CSP is a voluntary conservation program that supports ongoing stewardship of private agricultural lands by providing payments for maintaining and enhancing natural resources. Payments are made using three tiers of conservation contracts. CSP will be available any year on a rotational basis in as many watersheds as funding allows. Additional information about CSP is available from your local USDA Service Center or at <http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp-2006.html>.

###

CSP Informational Workshop Dates

Upper Grande Ronde Watershed

February 7, 2006 7:00 p.m.
OSU Agricultural Research Center
327 S. Tenth Street, Union

February 8, 2006 7:00 p.m.
St. Mary's Catholic Church
Corner of Division and 12th St, Elgin

February 13, 2006 7:00 p.m.
Blue Mountain Grange Hall
Corner of McAlister and Gekler, La Grande

Upper Klamath Lake Watershed

February 9, 2006 7:00 p.m.
Klamath Community College, Building 3, Room 310
7390 South 6th Street, Klamath Falls

February 23, 2006 1:00 p.m.
Klamath Community College
7390 South 6th Street, Klamath Falls

March 2, 2006 7:00 p.m.
Klamath Community College
7390 South 6th Street, Klamath Falls