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Natural Resources Conservation Service

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NEWS RELEASE

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Cape Cod Water Resources Restoration Project begins with ceremony in Barnstable

Additional \$1.5 million in Recovery Act funds announced

BARNSTABLE, Mass. (Sept. 20, 2010) -- Federal, state and local officials today joined Cape Cod community leaders in Barnstable to celebrate the launch of the Cape Cod Water Resources Restoration Project, a major effort to protect shellfish beds and wildlife habitat through Cape Cod. In a special ceremony, an agreement between the federal government and Cape Cod towns was signed, marking the start of this watershed-wide project.

Federal officials also announced another \$1.5 million in American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) funds for the project, which is in addition to the \$5 million in ARRA funding previously announced.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), in partnership with the Cape Cod Conservation District and the Barnstable County Commissioners, has begun an estimated \$30 million project that will restore 1,500 acres of degraded salt marsh, improve fish access to 4,200 acres of spawning habitat, and improve water quality for 7,300 acres of shellfish beds over 10 years.

A total of \$6.5 million in Recovery Act funding will allow work to begin in 2010 on 25 of the 76 proposed sites. Short-term economic benefits are expected, as well, from the creation of construction jobs.

The ceremony was held at Scudder Lane Town Landing, a popular shellfishing area that will be included in the project. Treatment of stormwater discharge will be improved at the site, benefitting nearby shellfish beds.

"We have come to understand on Cape Cod that the quality of our water means everything in terms of our economy and way of life. Our precious coastal resources not only define our maritime heritage, but will be the key to our economic future," said Representative Bill Delahunt. "This Cape Cod Water Resources Restoration Plan, which we shepherded through the Congress, is not only critical for the Cape, but will serve as an important model for the nation."

"With the signing of this agreement, the Cape Cod Water Resources Restoration Project will finally be implemented after many years of planning and the forging of partnerships," said Christine Clarke, NRCS State Conservationist for Massachusetts. "We know that these strong partnerships will continue as work gets underway across the Cape."

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"These 14 agreements will truly benefit the residents of the 15 towns in our Conservation District. Many hours and days of volunteer and professional effort have gone into these project preparations," said Lee Davis, Chairman of the Cape Cod Conservation District. "This has been and will continue to be a partnership success. Perseverance brings results."

"The Cape Cod Water Resources Restoration Project is important to the quality of life that is enjoyed by the residents and visitors of Barnstable County. Ensuring that our salt marshes, shellfish beds and fish spawning habitat are improved and restored is one of the keys to preserving the quality of life that we enjoy on Cape Cod," said Pat Flynn, Chairman of the Barnstable County Commissioners.

Information and updates on the Cape Cod Water Resources Restoration Project are available at www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CCWRRP.

Project sponsors are the Barnstable County Commissioners, Coastal Resources Committee; Cape Cod Conservation District; Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs; all 15 towns across Cape Cod; and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Additional cooperating federal, state and local agencies include the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game's Division of Ecological Restoration and Division of Marine Fisheries; the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, the Massachusetts Highway Department; the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management; the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; the National Park Service; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe.

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