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NEWS RELEASE

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CAPE COD WATER RESOURCES RESTORATION PROJECT RECEIVES \$5 MILLION IN RECOVERY ACT FUNDING

Project will improve degraded salt marshes, fish passages and shellfish beds

AMHERST, Mass., February 17, 2010 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced \$5 million in American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) funding for the Cape Cod Water Resources Restoration Project in Massachusetts. The federal funding will launch an effort to restore degraded salt marshes and obstructed fish passages, and improve water quality at shellfish sites throughout Cape Cod.

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 proposed an estimated \$30 million project that will restore 1,500 acres of degraded salt marsh, improve fish access to 4,200 of spawning habitat, and improve water quality for 7,300 acres of shellfish beds over 10 years.

The Recovery Act funding will allow work to begin this year on some of the 76 proposed sites. Short-term economic benefits are expected, as well, from the creation of construction jobs.

Over the course of the entire project, an estimated \$23 million in federal funds would provide technical and financial assistance through NRCS's Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program. Local communities will provide input and share in construction costs.

"The Cape Cod Water Resources Restoration Project is an exemplary partnership effort that we know will continue with implementation," said Christine Clarke, NRCS State Conservationist for Massachusetts. "We will need local input to prioritize which sites will be addressed with this initial funding."

"Shellfish beds on the Cape are often closed for extensive periods during the year because of poor water quality," said Lee Davis, chair of the Cape Cod Conservation District. "Storm water runoff is a significant source of pollution. Salt marsh degradation and barriers that interfere with the migration of fish are also a concern."

The Cape Cod Conservation District and Barnstable County Commissioners are the lead sponsors of the project, working in partnership with federal, state and local agencies, as well as all Barnstable County towns. NRCS will be the lead technical assistance agency.

The project has received Congressional authorization, which was required because the estimated total cost is more than \$5 million.

Massachusetts is one of five states receiving a total of \$9.4 million in ARRA funding to repair flood control structures, improve water quality, increase water supply, decrease soil erosion, and improve fish and wildlife habitat while creating jobs in rural communities.

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