

United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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TWO DELAWARE WATERSHEDS INCLUDED IN HISTORIC EXPANSION OF THE NATIONAL CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM

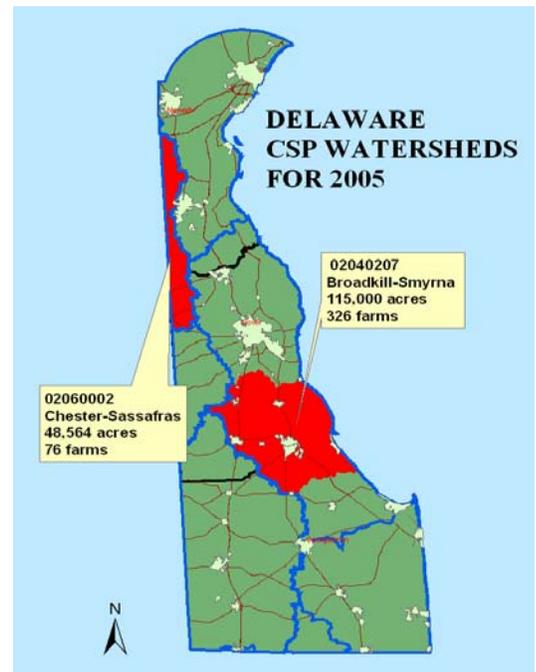
DOVER, DELAWARE, November 3, 2004— Two Delaware watersheds were among 202 across the nation invited to participate in a historic new program designed to reward farmers for long-term stewardship. U. S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann M. Veneman announced the selected watersheds today and said that sign-ups for the 2005 Conservation Security Program (CSP) would begin this winter.

CSP, part of the 2002 Farm Bill, was introduced last summer in 18 watersheds nationwide. In this first opportunity for farmers from each state to participate, about one eighth of the Nation's eligible farmers will be given the chance to apply each year over an eight-year period.

“As an agency and as a Nation we have helped farmers and ranchers fix conservation problems such as soil erosion or water conservation since the Dust Bowl days of the 1930s,” said Ginger Murphy, Delaware State Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) overseeing CSP. This, however, represents a whole new direction in conservation and agricultural policy and programs. These payments for demonstrable long-term stewardship will reward many of those who undertook conservation on their own initiative and who care for the resources we all share.”

The two Delaware watersheds selected were the Broadkill-Smyrna watershed located in eastern Kent and Sussex counties and the Chester-Sassafras watershed in western New Castle and Kent Counties. The Broadkill-Smyrna watershed is located entirely in Delaware. The Chester-Sassafras watershed was selected by Maryland and the majority of the watershed is located in Maryland.

Participants will be enrolled in one of three tiers in the program, depending on the extent of the conservation treatment in place on their farm or ranch. Payments will be based in



part on this existing conservation treatment as well as the participants willingness to undertake additional environmental enhancements.

Murphy said that while protecting soil and water quality is the “price of admission,” farmers will also have options to improve nutrient and pest management activities, improve wildlife habitat, undertake on-farm energy conservation, improve air quality, participate in environmental monitoring, and participate in watershed-wide stewardship programs,.

NRCS will offer local workshops in the selected watersheds to more fully explain the program to interested potential participants.

CSP will continue to be offered each year, on a rotational basis, in as many watersheds as funding allows. For more information on CSP and other NRCS programs, see <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs>.

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