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SUBJECT: PER - FY 2005 NRCS Graduate Studies Program

Purpose. To provide employees information regarding the FY05 NRCS Graduate Studies Program.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2005.

Action Required by: February 1, 2005

The 2005 NRCS Graduate Studies Program pays tuition and related expenses to selected employees for graduate studies, for the purpose of enhancing the agency's expertise in priority developmental needs areas. The program is open to employees at the GS-11 grade level and above (or equivalent pay systems.) Employees selected for the program will enter a formalized graduate study program at an accredited college or university

Office of Personnel Management Regulation 5CFR 410.308 allows an agency to authorize training for an employee to obtain an academic degree only to relieve recruitment and retention problems in occupations in which the agency has or anticipates a shortage of qualified personnel, especially in occupations which it has determined involve skills critical to its mission. Therefore, priority developmental areas identified for the 2005 Graduate Studies Program are as follows:

Degree Area

Soil Science or Earth Science
Soil Physics or Pedology
Environmental Law
Ag Engineering or Bio-Engineering
or Physical Science
Geology
Environmental Engineer
Aquatic Sciences or Ecology
Atmospheric Sciences
Forest Management
Information Systems Technology

Public Policy, i.e, Agricultural Public Policy Analysis
Public Administration

Emphasis Area

Geostatistical Analysis
Hydropedology

Bionergy/Biomass

Fluvial Geomorphology

Aquatic Biology
Atmospheric Ecology
Agro-Forestry
Management Information
Systems

Only applicants requesting funding for degrees in these priority areas will be considered.

All selectees must meet applicable college or university admission requirements and successfully complete all academic course work and related requirements. Use of NRCS Graduate Studies Program funds will not be allowed for university required courses to meet entrance requirements into the university graduate school.

These and all other requirements and restrictions for application to this program are outlined in the announcement and application package. For a copy of the announcement and application package, please contact Eileen Campbell, Training Officer.

Questions concerning the 2005 Graduate Studies Program should be directed to Eileen Campbell, Training Officer, at (302) 678-4161 or email eileen.campbell@de.usda.gov.

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GINGER L. MURPHY
State Conservationist

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