

# **NEWS RELEASE**

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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## **MOSES COULEE WATERSHED SELECTED FOR 2004 CSP SIGN-UP**

**SPOKANE WA, May 20, 2004**— The Moses Coulee Watershed located in central Washington in Douglas and Grant Counties has been selected as one of the nation’s 18 watersheds that will be included in the fiscal year 2004 Conservation Security Program (CSP) sign-up to be held this summer.

“The selection of the Moses Coulee in this first sign-up represents a balance of resource needs, historic stewardship, potential producer eligibility, and the technology and adequate staff needed to successfully implement the program,” said NRCS State Conservationist, Gus Hughbanks.. “Nationally, the selected watersheds reflect a cross-section of land uses, crop regions and landscapes that will test the basic concepts in NRCS’ newest conservation program,” he said.

In order to implement CSP this fiscal year, the Natural Resources Conservation Service will begin to train employees within the watersheds immediately on the basics of the program. Detailed training will occur once the interim final rule is published in early summer.

“A sign-up announcement will be published along with the interim final rule that will detail the specific program requirements within the selected watersheds,” Hughbanks said.

Nationally, the fiscal year 2004 CSP budget of \$41.4 million will allow NRCS to write 3,000 to 5,000 contracts. The contracts will be determined in a national selection process that will be described in the sign-up notice.

According to Hughbanks, all CSP applications that meet the sign-up criteria will be placed in an enrollment category and considered regardless of available funding.

“Agricultural producers in Moses Coulee watershed have been protecting our soil and water resources for years,” Hughbanks said. “Now they will be rewarded for that stewardship, and will become the models for future CSP participants. It’s a bright new day for conservation and I’m delighted we’re a part of this exciting first sign-up,” he said.

CSP is a voluntary program that supports ongoing conservation stewardship of agricultural working lands and enhances the condition of America’s natural resources. Additional information on CSP, including the *Federal Register* notices, public comments and frequently asked questions, is at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp>.

For additional information contact Ross Lahren, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs at 509-323-2971.