

For Immediate Release

Contact: Tanya Koch, State Public
Affairs Officer, 701-530-2096

NRCS Announces Funding for the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI)

BISMARCK, ND April 30, 2013 – North Dakota Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced today additional funding for the second year of the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI).

Nationwide, NRCS will make available nearly \$35 million in financial assistance to farmers and ranchers in 165 priority watersheds this year. Funds will be used to implement suites of conservation practices intended to improve water quality. Four watersheds in North Dakota have been recognized as priority watersheds under this initiative—Upper and Lower Goodman Creek, Buffalo Creek, and Moon Lake, which are located in Dunn, Mercer, and Stutsman Counties.

“These are voluntary efforts focused in small watersheds where the implementation of conservation systems can yield results for locally important waters,” said NRCS Acting Chief Jason Weller. “When farmers and ranchers work to improve water quality, they also help provide the nation with clean waterways, safe drinking water, and healthy habitat for fish and wildlife.”

During the first year of the initiative in 2012, NRCS provided \$34 million in financial assistance to farmers and ranchers in 154 small watersheds, ranging from 10,000 to 40,000 acres in size. In North Dakota, water restoration efforts through the NWQI were focused on the Turtle River Watershed and the Spring Creek Watershed.

“We are very pleased to once again offer water quality assistance to help our State’s farmers and ranchers address critical water quality issues,” stated State Conservationist Mary Podoll. “It took a big effort on the part of NRCS, working with local partners and state conservation and water quality agencies, to identify watersheds where these conservation investments have the best chance to improve water quality. We believe the four watersheds identified will experience enhanced water quality as a result of our efforts.”

North Dakota NRCS worked closely with partners, including the North Dakota State Health Department, to refine the eligible priority watersheds this year. These partners assisted in selecting its four priority watersheds where on-farm conservation investments will deliver the greatest water quality improvement benefits. These watershed projects will each address one or more of the following water quality concerns: excess nitrogen, phosphorous, sediment or pathogens.

Eligible producers will receive assistance under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for installing conservation systems that may include practices such as nutrient management, cover crops, conservation cropping systems, filter strips, terraces, and animal feeding operations.

NRCS accepts applications for financial assistance on a continuous basis throughout the year. Applications submitted by June 21, 2013 will be considered for funding in 2013. Check with your local NRCS office to see if you are located in a selected watershed.

For more information on NWQI read here:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/financial/eqip/?cid=stelprdb1047761>

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