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NRCS Announces Water Conservation Project Assistance

TEMPLE, TEXAS, April 6, 2010 – The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced the availability of \$61.2 million in financial assistance funding for Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) projects. This funding will help producers conserve surface and ground water and improve water quality on agricultural land.

AWEP projects are implemented by NRCS entering into partnership agreements with eligible entities. NRCS works with these partners to help landowners plan and implement conservation practices in project areas established through the agreements.

Of the \$61.2 million, approximately \$40.4 million will be made available to AWEP partners whose projects were approved during last fiscal year and approximately \$20.7 million will be available for new project proposals.

The following partnership entities are eligible to submit proposals for funding: federally recognized Indian Tribes, States, units of local government, agricultural associations, and other groups of producers--such as irrigation associations, agricultural land trusts, or other nongovernmental organization--that have experience working with agricultural producers. When an AWEP project area has been approved and announced, individual producers may apply for program benefits through their local NRCS office.

Helping People Help the Land

Types of water enhancement activities intended with this request for proposal are:

- Water quality or water conservation plan development;
- Water conservation restoration or enhancement projects;
- Water quality or quantity restoration or enhancement projects;
- Irrigation system improvement and irrigation efficiency enhancements;
- Activities designed to mitigate the effects of drought; and
- Related activities determined to help achieve water quality or water conservation benefits on agricultural land.

Deadline for partner organizations to submit a proposal is May 17, 2010. The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill) established AWEP. To view the full request for proposal or find additional AWEP information, visit: www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/AWEP/.