

U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperative Conservation

Annual Report 2007

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Cooperative Conservation
External Activities for the FY2007 Annual Report

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Geographic location or area of activity: South Florida Everglades Ecosystem

Description of activity: Restoring the Everglades is a national, state, tribal, and local priority. The South Florida ecosystem provides a rich natural heritage for all Americans and supports the economy and the high quality of life of Floridians and Native American Indians who live there. The American people have a strong interest in preserving this 18,000-square-mile region of subtropical uplands, wetlands, and coral reefs that extends from the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes south of Orlando through Florida Bay and the reefs southwest of the Florida Keys.

Restoration work within this sensitive ecosystem is complex and challenging. To facilitate and coordinate restoration activities, Congress, in 1996, established an intergovernmental, “South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force.” The Task Force is comprised of federal, state, local and tribal representatives and supported by the Florida-based Working Group and Science Coordination Group. The Secretary of Agriculture is a Task Force member and has designated the Deputy Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment to represent the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on the Task Force. Activities conducted by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) are an integral component of the restoration work.

NRCS technical assistance is targeted towards nutrient management, water quality, and water conservation concerns associated with animal feeding, livestock grazing operations and fruit and crop production within the Everglades ecosystem. Financial assistance is provided through a variety of USDA Farm Bill Programs. USDA’s Wetland Reserve Program and Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program are important funding sources to help carry out the land acquisition strategy as a part of the restoration effort. The 1996 Farm bill provided \$200 million to the Secretary of Interior to fund or conduct restoration activities in the Everglades ecosystem.

NRCS also administers the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) which is a voluntary program intended to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging Federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural production. Under CIG, Environmental Quality Incentives Program funds are used to award competitive grants to non-Federal governmental or non-governmental organizations, Tribes, or individuals. CIG enables NRCS to work with other public and private entities to accelerate technology transfer and adoption of promising technologies.

The World Wildlife Fund, Inc. (Florida) was a recipient of a FY-2005 CIG for \$999,923 that focused on a “Market-Based Program for Environmental Services” on South Florida Ranch Lands Florida’s Lake Okeechobee which is at the heart of the Everglades system. Lake Okeechobee suffers from excessive phosphorous (P) loads. Agriculture is the dominant land use

and a significant source of P in the watershed. New approaches to managing runoff from this large area can help improve water quality. The purpose of this program is to design, establish, and evaluate a market-based program on ranches in the Lake Okeechobee watershed to reduce P loads, improve wildlife habitat, and sequester carbon. Results of the pilot will be used to design a scalable version of the program that could be used on a broader scale.

Interagency (Task Force) partners: U.S. Department of the Interior, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Seminole Tribe of Florida, U.S. Department of Justice, , Department of the Army, Florida Water Resources Advisory Commission.

Local partners: City of South Bay, Miami-Dade County Executive Office of the Governor, South Florida Water Management District

Activity url: <http://www.sfrestore.org/>

Pictures available? Yes

USDA Activity contact(s)

Task Force Designated Representative: Gary Mast, Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment

NRCS NHQ Backup and Point of Contact: Noller Herbert, Director, Conservation Engineering Division

Working Group: Edward Wright, NRCS, STC Staff, Florida

Science Coordination Group: Bill Reck, NRCS, ENTSC, Greensboro, NC
Calvin Arnold, ARS, Fort Pierce, FL

Louisiana Native Plant Initiative USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Louisiana

Description of activity: The Louisiana Native Plant Initiative is a cooperative effort to help conserve a vanishing natural resource in Louisiana--native plants. Public and private land managers around the state have a growing interest to use locally adapted native plant materials for restoration, conservation, and re-vegetation projects. Working groups within the initiative are cooperating to identify resource areas, develop species lists for seed collections, establish seed increase sites, develop relationships to promote commercial production of native plants, and develop partnerships to establish future funding needs.

Interagency partners: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Local partners: Coastal Plain Conservancy, McNeese State University, USGS National Wetlands Research Center, Nicholls State University, Barataria Terrebonne National Estuary Program

Activity URL: http://www.la.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/PM/native_plants.html

Pictures available? Yes

Activity contact(s): Dr. Richard Neill (NRCS) richard.neill@la.usda.gov

Utah Partners for Conservation and Development USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Utah

Description of activity: Utah Partners for Conservation and Development (Utah PCD) is a statewide partnership composed of leaders from state and federal agencies, academia, and non-governmental organizations. Utah PCD identifies common watershed issues and works through local teams to find consensus driven solutions for conservation and economic growth.

Since 2005, Utah Partners have initiated 240 restoration projects on 150,000 acres throughout Utah. Projects include improvement of critical wildlife habitat, riparian restoration, and wildfire rehabilitation. In recognition of the important conservation work taking place, the Utah Legislature in 2007, authorized \$6 million annually to assist in watershed restoration, quality growth, and rangeland improvement. The combination of state and federal appropriated dollars and NGOs' contributions amounted to \$12.8 million committed to conservation efforts statewide in Utah. This year, Utah PCDs' rapid response to the State's historic wildfire season was possible because of in-place infrastructure and relationships. Joint Utah PCD efforts included immediate restoration and long-term rehabilitation planning, support to affected communities.

Interagency partners:

- U.S. Forest Service, Intermountain Region
- USDA NRCS
- US Park Service
- Farm Service Agency
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Bureau of Land Management
- State of Utah
- Utah Department of Natural Resources
- Utah Department of Agriculture and Food
- Utah Department of Environmental Quality
- Utah State University Extension Service

Local partners: Utah Association of Conservation Districts, Utah RC&D Councils Association, Utah Schools & Institutional Trust Lands

Activity URL:

https://fs.ogm.utah.gov/PUB/Oil&Gas/Outreach/WatershedInitiative_042007_files/frame.htm

Pictures available? Yes

Activity contact(s): Andy Mason (NRCS), 202 -720-2308 andrew.mason@wdc.usda.gov
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State Areas for Wildlife Enhancement USDA Farm Service Agency

Geographic location or area of activity: 38 states

Description of activity: In FY 2007, USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) unveiled a new 500,000-acre Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) practice to improve habitat for high-priority wildlife species throughout the United States.

FSA's development of SAFE encourages the public, producers, wildlife experts in state and federal agencies, the nonprofit community and others to work together. The goal is to create and submit proposals to benefit high-value wildlife in need of special consideration in their part of the country. FSA hopes this flexible, results-oriented, locally led practice will encourage cooperative SAFE proposals, proposals that benefit more than a single species and that address species that require a regional approach in portions of several states.

Interagency partners: Several partners

Local partners: Several groups, including Pheasants Forever.

Activity url: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/safepr08.pdf

Pictures available? No

Activity contact(s): David Hoge, 720-7674

Conservation Reserve Program Northern Bobwhite Quail Habitat Initiative USDA Farm Service Agency

Geographic location or area of activity: Specific geographic areas in 35 states.

Description of activity

In FY2007, producers enrolled more than 38,000 acres in CRP under the Northern Bobwhite Quail Habitat Initiative. The cumulative total at the end of FY2007 was 168,514 acres.

USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Northern Bobwhite Quail Habitat Initiative is aimed at creating 250,000 acres of habitat for the northern bobwhite quail. Northern bobwhite quail are a native quail species with an historic range in 35 states. The birds are a valued inhabitant of farm landscapes, an important aspect of rural culture, and are key to the heritage of hunting. However, the bobwhite quail population has declined from an estimated 59 million birds in 1980 to about 20 million in 1999. Their habitats are disappearing due to urbanization, increased grassland cultivation, and a transitioning of once grassy fields into woods and forests – a process called succession. The initiative introduces a conservation

practice intended to create 250,000 acres of early successional grass buffers along agricultural field borders.

Interagency partners: The initiative partners FSA with landowners, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and 32 state fish and wildlife agencies.

Local partners: The initiative partners FSA with landowners, Quail Unlimited, the Southeast Quail Study Group, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, the National Wild Turkey Federation, and other conservation groups, including local conservation districts.

Activity url: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

Pictures available? No

Activity contact(s): Lana Nesbit, 720-8772

Forestry Cooperation in New Hampshire through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: New Hampshire

Description of activity: New Hampshire ranks second among the States in terms of forest cover, but its NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) proudly leads the Nation in allocating resources to address forest land environmental concerns. With executive support from NRCS, the New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands, the Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry, and the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, the NH State Technical Committee dedicated over 15 percent of its FY-2005 EQIP budget to forest land conservation practices (compared with between 1 and 5 percent in most States). In FY 2005, EQIP funding was used to accomplish the following:

- 1,246 acres of forest land thinned
- 2 acres of new riparian forest buffers established
- 190 acres of land planted to native trees and shrubs
- 152 acres of forest harvest trails and landings stabilized
- 7,185 acres of forest stand prescription (forest management plans)

Interagency partners: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry

Local partners: University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension

Activity URL: <ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/NH/WWW/News/Two%20Chiefs'%20Award.pdf>

Pictures available? No

Activity contact(s): Andy Mason (NRCS), 202 -720-2308, andrew.mason@wdc.usda.gov
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North Dakota Living Snow Fence Task Force USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: North Dakota

Description of activity: The North Dakota Living Snow Fence Task Force has been successful in delivering the North Dakota Living Snow Fence Initiative since 1997. Members of the multi-agency Task Force have been exceptionally willing to support the initiative in a unified and collaborative effort toward a common goal. They have utilized existing delivery mechanisms, while taking advantage of a combination of currently available and creative new local, State, and Federal funding sources. North Dakota has established 526 new projects and planted 833 miles of trees, protecting 236 miles of roads in 40 counties. Over \$2.8 million in grant funds have been made available. The Living Snow Fence Initiative has been led by a pro-active task force that has developed cost-effective and sensible solutions to mitigate life threatening problems. Through initiative, partnerships, resourcefulness, and creativity, the Task Force will continue to succeed. In doing so, they will make North Dakota a better, safer place to live.

Interagency partners:

- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- USDA Farm Service Agency, North Dakota State office
- State of North Dakota Office of the Governor
- North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts
- North Dakota Department of Emergency Services
- North Dakota Department of Transportation
- North Dakota Urban and Community Forestry Association
- North Dakota State Soil Conservation Committee

Local partners: N/A

Activity URL: N/A

Pictures available? Yes

Activity contact(s): Andy Mason (NRCS), 202 -720-2308, andrew.mason@wdc.usda.gov
Stephanie Bertaina (USFS), 202-205-0933, sbertaina@fs.fed.us

Restoring Riparian Forests on the Hopi Reservation USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Hopi Reservation, Arizona

Description of activity: A cooperative initiative has been implemented to restore riparian forest on the Hopi reservation in Arizona. The Hopi are using Forest Service and NRCS training to identify, collect, propagate, and deploy native species to restore riparian forests after the removal of invasive species. The tribe is also using curricula prepared by Forest Service and NRCS to teach both their children and Navajo children about conservation issues. The youths are further

involved in restoration efforts on their lands by growing plants in a Cultural Plant Propagation Center (CPPC) at Moenkopi School.

Interagency partners (Federal, State, and tribal government)

The Hopi Tribe Department of Natural Resources
NRCS Los Lunas Plant Materials Centers
NRCS Aberdeen Plant Materials Centers
Forest Service Rural and Development, Southern Research Station
Forest Service State and Private Forestry Region 3
Forest Service National Forest Service Region 1
Forest Service State and Private Forestry Northeastern Area

Local partners (Local government, community groups, nonprofits, other entities)

The Hopi Tribe Moenkopi School

Activity URL: N/A

Pictures available? No

Activity contact(s): Andy Mason (NRCS), 202 -720-2308, andrew.mason@wdc.usda.gov
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**Alder Springs - a collaborative approach to forest health, fuel reduction, and carbon sequestration research on the Mendocino National Forest
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service**

Geographic location or area of activity: California

Description of activity: The USDA Forest Service (Mendocino National Forest, Region 5 State and Private Forestry, and PSW Research Station), along with partners California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), and Winrock International (non-profit organization), have collaborated in a cutting edge partnership project that will result in improving forest health and fuel reduction while researching carbon sequestration.

The Forest Service (FS) awarded this contract project under the stewardship contract authority to treat approximately 3,662 acres on National Forest in a Wildland Urban Interface area. The project consists of thinning forest stands and removing biomass in order to reduce the size and intensity of future wildfires while, improving forest health. Biomass removed will be transported to a local co-generation plant for conversion to electricity.

With current interest in carbon sequestration to help mitigate global warming, FS researchers are collaborating with CAL FIRE and Winrock International to measure greenhouse gas emission reductions resulting from fuels/forest management treatments; evaluate and quantify potential revenues in current and future carbon markets; and evaluate the potential for renewable energy credits and incentives associated with biomass energy production. Treatment of the project area has begun by Sierra Pacific Industries and research plots established in sample areas. Tours of this project have been given to nationwide FS leaders, state and private partners, and local

elected officials. Another tour is scheduled for the Forestry Research Advisory Council, a group chartered by the Secretary of Agriculture, in November 2007.

Interagency partners: California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Forest Service

Local partners: Winrock International - Nick Martin, Program Officer

Activity URL: N/A

Pictures available? Yes

Activity contact(s): Andy Mason (NRCS), 202 -720-2308, andrew.mason@wdc.usda.gov
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Forest Health and Fire Protection in Southern California USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Southern California

Description of activity:

The USDA Forest Service (FS) and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and San Bernardino, Riverside, and San Diego counties have collaborated in a highly effective partnership across ownership lines to seamlessly ensure forest health and fuel treatments are placed in the most critical community protection and evacuation route sites. This work was accomplished in response to the catastrophic forest mortality in southern California forests in San Bernardino, Riverside and San Diego counties. The combination of a five-year drought and insect and diseases resulted in a massive area of vegetation mortality in 2003 - 2004 that threatened human safety and had significant economic and ecological impacts on communities and forests. The work of these partners across the landscape has transformed these forests from an explosion waiting to happen to forests with a future.

Since 2004, NRCS has been entrusted with \$126 million to work with partners to clear dead and dying trees from southern California forest lands. In October 2007, baked by drought and whipped by Santa Ana winds, southern California burned ferociously—in places overlapping areas that had been recently been cleared of forest fuels. So inevitably the question surfaces: *Was it worth the investment?*

Twenty-five year resident Robert Carlyle explained: “The clearing below the canopy saved lives. If it wasn’t for the clearing work and the back fires, we wouldn’t be standing here talking now.” Carlyle says he has seen other forest thinning efforts in his years living in the Palomar area, but he said the recent efforts succeeded best because they were coordinated and well supervised. State Conservationist Ed Burton credits the strong partnership with southern California Counties, Fire Safe Councils, Forest Service and others for that coordination and consistency. Tom Schott, a forester and 30-year veteran with NRCS, says that the Palomar Mountain area was one of three priority areas for forest thinning work in San Diego County due to the area’s high fuel load in

close proximity to hundreds of homes. “Drought and insects had really weakened the forests that the communities of Bailey Meadows and Birch Hill call home.”

When fire agencies received word during the recent Poomacha fire that flames had reached the Palomar area, personnel assumed that this meant the loss of 50 structures. But after visiting the area they discovered only one residence had burned. They credited the difference to the recent removal of dead and dying trees. Palomar is just one community that was cleared of excess fire fuels in the years since the 2003 fires inspired legislators to provide funds for forest safety improvements.

NRCS, together with County, State and Federal partners, removed over 600,000 trees from some 55,000 acres across the Counties of San Diego, San Bernardino and Riverside (see chart below). Fire Safe Councils, working with the RCD of Greater San Diego and the residents themselves, also made significant contributions to removing excess trees and brush. The story of forest thinning in Palomar—like that in the Lake Arrowhead region in San Bernardino County—is not measured by whether the communities will ever face fire again, which they almost certainly will. Rather, it is measured in how intensely the fire burns and whether cleared corridors exist to give firefighters a chance to reach the flames—and residents a chance to exit safely. In southern California’s fire ecosystems, that is how you spell success.

Watershed Recovery Project Status in Southern California (as of Nov. 6, 2007)

County	Trees Removed	ACres Treated	Total Project ACres	Total Funds
Riverside	80,022	5,690	5,779	\$22 million
San Bernardino	389,882	28,522	30,000	\$72 million
San Diego	144,286	20,608	21,418	\$32 million
Total	614,190	54,820	57,197	\$126 million

Interagency partners: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), Forest Service Forest Health Enhancement Program, Forest Service Predictive Services

Local partners: Riverside County, San Bernardino County, San Diego County, San Bernardino County Fire Department, Dept. of Planning & Land Use, San Diego County, CDF and Riverside County Fire

Activity URL: <http://mcfsc.org/MAST%20Award.htm>

Pictures available? Yes

Activity contact(s): Andy Mason (NRCS), 202 -720-2308, andrew.mason@wdc.usda.gov
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Targeted Grazing USDA Forest Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Nationwide

Description of activity: Wildfire, fuels, and invasive species are two of the top threats to our Nation's forest and rangeland ecosystems. These are complex and difficult issues to address. Targeted grazing can effectively treat fuels loading and invasive species infestations across thousands of acres at a cost that is significantly lower than many of the available tools.

Background: Targeted grazing has been utilized as an effective tool to treat fuels loading and invasive species on Forest Service lands for decades with a unit cost that is much lower than most treatments options. However, this tool is not being utilized to its full potential. The livestock industry is anxious to utilize its resources in addressing the issues of fuels management and invasive species treatment. With the recent release of the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) book "Targeted Grazing: A natural approach to vegetation and landscape enhancement" (<http://www.cnr.uidaho.edu/rx-grazing/Handbook.htm>) the time is ripe for highlighting the options this tool can provide.

Key Points: This coalition is:

- Developing pilot projects to showcase how Targeted Grazing can be utilized for fuels and invasive species treatments (preliminary locations in Colorado and Oregon).
- Generating articles aimed at reaching Fire and Fuels, Range Management, and Invasive Species specialists through relevant publications
- Investigating options for development of a information sharing and decision support tool database

Interagency partners:

USDA: Forest Service, ARS and NRCS

USDI: BLM

Local partners: University of Idaho, Idaho State University, Texas A&M University, Utah State University, Montana State University, North Dakota State University, Oregon State University, Washington State University, University of Nevada, Tennessee State University, University of Tennessee

American Sheep Industry Association (ASI)

National Sheep Industry Improvement Center

Joe Skeen Institute for Rangeland Restoration

National Center for Appropriate Technology

Behavioral Education for Human, Animal, Vegetation, and Ecosystem Management (BEHAVE)

Activity url <http://www.cnr.uidaho.edu/rx-grazing/>
<http://www.sheepusa.org>

Pictures available? Yes

Activity contacts:

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Chesapeake Partnership for Forest Conservation USDA Forest Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York

Description of activity: Over the past year, the Chesapeake Partnership for Forest Conservation delivered a compelling message for forest conservation, restoration, and stewardship in the watershed that has resulted in setting significant forest conservation goals for the region. This extensive Partnership is credited with two key outcomes:

- 1) The publication of *The State of Chesapeake Forests* report (<http://www.na.fs.fed.us/watershed/socf.shtm>) and
- 2) The Chesapeake Executive Council Forest Conservation Directive and resulting goals (<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/info/pressreleases/ec2006/Directive%2006-1%20Forests%20color.pdf>).

The State of Chesapeake Forests, published in September 2006, is an unprecedented and comprehensive analysis of the importance of watershed forests and their vulnerability to development in this region. The report assesses forest conditions, communicates the critical role of forests to watershed integrity, and develops strategies to improve water quality and overall forest health.

Based on the findings and suggested strategies in the report, the Chesapeake Executive Council (Governors of Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania; Administrator of EPA; Mayor of Washington, DC; and the Chesapeake Bay Commission) signed the Forest Conservation Directive at its September 2006 meeting. This Directive committed to identify priority areas for conservation develop goals and recommend strategies to protect forests and improve stewardship, link stormwater management and land use regulations with forest conservation and expand forest alliances.

The Directive ensures that the Partnership continues to play a high-profile role in the region as forestry goals are developed and implemented for the watershed and individual jurisdictions. Because of their expertise in forest policy, the Pinchot Institute for Conservation began working with the Partnership to ensure strong goals were developed that lead to a collaborative approach across political boundaries.

The Partnership has catalyzed the leaders of the Bay jurisdictions to commit to permanently protecting at least one million acres of high-value forest from development and developing policies to reduce the rate of forest loss. In addition, the Partnership has advanced bold and creative strategies to protect important forests; goals such as a no-net-loss of forests, regulating green infrastructure retention for stormwater benefits, and watershed-wide sustainable forestry policies that include a transferable state income tax credit for conservation donations and the development of an ecosystem marketplace tailored to forest conservation.

This process has led to regular meetings of the Bay watershed's State Foresters, furthered understanding on issues such as stormwater and nutrient trading to forestry professionals, and provided a platform for multiple government and non-government agencies to work together on forestry issues. For the first time, the State Foresters of the headwater states of Delaware, New York, and West Virginia have taken an active role in Chesapeake watershed. The Partnership will continue to expand in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. In other parts of the country, as haphazardly planned development spreads at the expense of resource lands, as new and existing invasive species establish themselves, and as the parcelization of forest land increases, the job of protecting and managing the nation's forests becomes more challenging. Effective and diverse partnerships, like this one, will become more necessary.

Interagency partners: Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry, Virginia Department of Forestry, US Geological Survey, National Park Service, US Environmental Protection Agency

Local partners: The Conservation Fund, Pinchot Institute, Stroud Water Center

Activity url: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net>

Activity contact: Sally Claggett, sclaggett@fs.fed.us

Restoring the Clackamas River Watershed USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Clackamas River Basin, Oregon

Description of activity: The Clackamas Stewardship Partners (CSP) is a group of diverse stakeholders dedicated to restoring ecological function of the Clackamas River Basin while benefiting local economies. Using stewardship contracting authorities, Clackamas Stewardship Partners prioritizes, identifies and designs restoration projects to recommend to the Clackamas River Ranger District of the Mt. Hood National Forest. In less than three years, the CSP has taken a leadership role in transforming an atmosphere of polarization and distrust to an environment where common-ground solutions are not only developed, but implemented.

Major Accomplishments of the Clackamas Stewardship Partners: As of the end of 2007, the seven awarded stewardship contracts included 1350 acres of commercial thinning. This thinning has paid for over \$1,200,000 of restorative services. An additional \$650,000 of receipts has been retained to fund additional restoration projects that have been recommended by the CSP. Based upon recommendations of the CSP, the USDA Forest Service has approved additional restoration projects that will be advertised and awarded in FY08 and FY09. These restoration projects are

4,000 acres of commercial thinning, road closure and maintenance, road repair, snag and down wood creation, culvert replacement, repairing damage done by off-highway vehicles and pre-commercial thinning. The commercial thinning is expected to pay for all of the restoration projects and generate an estimated \$2,000,000 in retained receipts for additional projects.

Interagency partners: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA Forest Service, Clackamas River Ranger District, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife.

Local partners: Portland State University, Clackamas County Soil & Water Conservation District, Clackamas County Board of County Commissioners, Clackamas River Basin Council, NRCS & NW Oregon Resource Conservation and Development Council, Gifford Pinchot Task Force, Northwest Forest Conservancy, Oregon Wild

Activity URL: N/A

Pictures available? Yes

Activity contact(s): Andy Mason (NRCS), 202 -720-2308, andrew.mason@wdc.usda.gov
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CEAP Jobos Bay, Puerto Rico Special Emphasis Watershed Partnership USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Puerto Rico, Caribbean Region, Semiarid Coastal Plains

Description of activity: The Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) is an effort by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to quantify environmental effects and benefits of conservation practices. This project establishes a CEAP Special Emphasis Watershed (SEW) collocated at the Jobos Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) in Puerto Rico. Special Emphasis Watersheds are strategically located watersheds with ongoing research and demonstration activities that address specific resource concerns such as water quality. The Jobos Bay project is the first SEW established in the tropics. It highlights interactions between upland and coastal ecosystems, and initiates a collaborative partnership between USDA and NOAA to address spatially complex natural resource issues in coastal environments.

The vision for the Jobos Bay partnership is to establish a collaborative long-term research and monitoring program for Jobos Bay, Puerto Rico with NOAA, USDA and other partners. The project will also guide NOAA, USDA and other federal, state, local and academic partners in establishing complementary CEAP Special Emphasis Watersheds in other tropical and sub-tropical environments. The overall goal is the development and adoption of coordinated watershed conservation practices and coral reef management options for tropical and sub-tropical ecosystems.

This watershed study is the first coordinated research and demonstration project to meet the management and conservation objectives of both USDA and NOAA. The project also directly

addresses the goals and objectives of the Coral Reef Task Force concerning land based sources of pollution and increasing partnerships for coral reef conservation.

The project objectives are to evaluate the environmental effects and benefits of conservation practices implemented on agricultural lands to the Jobos Bay ecosystem.

- USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) is leading research to quantify the effects of specific conservation practices on the delivery of water, sediment, and chemicals from agricultural lands to surface and shallow ground waters.
- NRCS is the lead coordinating agency for this project and conducts outreach activities with the conservation partnership. NRCS is assisting private landowners and Puerto Rico Land Authority tenants in implementation and development of innovative conservation practices with farmers.
- NOAA is the lead in defining the state of Jobos Bay water quality, benthic habitats, and living marine resources. In addition, NOAA is collaborating with the Jobos Bay NERR to monitor changes in coastal ecosystem components to assess the effects of implemented conservation practices.

Current partners expect to complete the following products over the next three years:

- ARS will evaluate a suitable watershed model and conservation effects practices models. ARS will also conduct field studies and analyze the data to calibrate their models.
- NRCS will develop a suite of innovative conservation practices, select willing cooperator farms and generate public outreach documents.
- NOAA will complete Summit to Sea modeling and provide maps and GIS data. In addition, NOAA will design and implement biological, chemical and physical monitoring studies.

Interagency partners: USDA-NRCS, USDA-ARS, NOAA, US Fish and Wildlife Service, PR-NRCS, PR Land Authority, PR Agricultural Extension Service, PR Environmental Quality Board, PR Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Local partners: Jobos Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, University of Puerto Rico - Mayaguez

Activity url: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Technical/nri/ceap/>

Pictures available? Yes

Activity contact(s):

ARS: Mark R. Walbridge, National Program Leader, Soil and Water Resource Management
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Kentucky Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Partnership USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Upper Green River Watershed, Kentucky

Description of activity: The Kentucky Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Partnership includes 14 counties in the Upper Green River Watershed in South Central Kentucky. This partnership is Kentucky's first designated CREP area and is the single largest conservation program in the state's history to protect a unique and biologically diverse watershed. This effort has solidified and strengthened the existing partnership between the USDA's NRCS and FSA, the state agencies of Forestry, Conservation, Fish and Wildlife Resources and Water along with the private sector including The Nature Conservancy. This federal, state and private initiative targets significant resources to the geographic area of the Upper Green River to address significant agriculture-related environmental concerns under a coordinated effort to protect an extremely valuable ecosystem—the Mammoth Cave System.

This voluntary incentive-based private landowner program sets ambitious goals and forges an intergovernmental and public/private partnership to focus technical and financial assistance to this region to ensure the long term success of this effort. A state coordinating committee provides program guidance from state agency leaders. County work groups inform and encourage landowner participation, coordinate services to program participants and guide implementation of best management practices to meet project goals.

This partnership was established over five years ago and, using a “locally led” conservation approach, has now reached two-thirds of its objectives for enrolling land in the CREP. The partnership's significant impacts are the tremendous land conservation being undertaken, the financial incentive to landowners for their conservation efforts, and the close working relationship of partnership agencies.

Interagency partners: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA Farm Service Agency, KY Division of Conservation, KY Division of Forestry, KY Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, KY Division of Water

Local partners: The Nature Conservancy, 14 local conservation districts

Activity URL n/a

Pictures available? Yes

Activity contact(s): Andy Mason (NRCS), 202 -720-2308, andrew.mason@wdc.usda.gov
Stephanie Bertaina (USFS), 202-205-0933, sbertaina@fs.fed.us

Karnowsky Creek Project USDA Forest Service

Geographic Location: The Karnowsky Creek Project is located along the Central Oregon coast, in the Siuslaw River watershed.

Description of Activity: The Karnowsky Creek project exemplifies how critical partnerships can be to overall project design and implementation. By combining the interests of local communities, state and federal governments, nonprofit partners, and the talents and enthusiasm of high school and university students, the vision of a "whole" watershed approach can be made into reality.

Karnowsky Creek is one of many small, complex tributaries that flow into the Siuslaw River Estuary, a mere nine miles from the Pacific Ocean on the Central Oregon coast. These tributaries and the surrounding watershed comprise critical habitat centers for numerous terrestrial and aquatic species, including salmon, black bear, bobcat, elk, deer, and many birds. Yet, because of historical land clearing in the late 1880s for cattle grazing, the creek slowly silted in, ultimately reducing its capacity to provide habitat for salmon.

With the help of two Forest Service watershed specialists, Karen Bennett and Johan Hagervorst and Pete Barrell, executive director of the Siuslaw Watershed Council possibilities for restoring the creek to its former natural state were shared. As a designer with a landscape architecture background, Barrell became intrigued with the notion of restoring the landscape. Soon after, with funding help from the Forest Service, six landscape architect students were enlisted for an eight-week period during the summer of 2001 to focus on producing a restoration design proposal, together with a grant proposal to fund the restoration efforts.

A partnership between the Forest Service, Siuslaw Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Siuslaw Watershed Council took the students' proposal and applied for and received grants of \$350,000 to restore more than two miles of stream channel and its adjacent wetlands, floodplains and tidally influenced areas. Both the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and the National Forest Foundation provided funding for Phase I of the project, with the Forest Service contributing funds for planning, design, and project management.

Local people have joined in as volunteers and partners to implement the restoration plan; planting riparian trees, shrubs, and wetland vegetation. In addition, Paula Crowder of the Siuslaw Institute, actively engaged students from the Mapleton School District in growing native plants on campus and planting them in the project area. The Mapleton students also helped establish baseline monitoring data by collecting water quality samples and monitoring ground water wells throughout the project area.

The project is expected to extend chum salmon habitat by allowing tidal influence back into the bottom half mile of the project area. Further upstream, Coho salmon will rear in the slower moving waters of the new channel, adjacent ponds and floodplain during the summer and the winter. Further upstream still, a much steeper part of the stream will be restored to provide spawning opportunities for salmon.

On a recent visit to Karnowsky Creek, partners observed that the natural paths of the little streams and tributaries had once again taken hold on the landscape. Where previously grassy pasture grew; water, salmon, birds and the fresh shoots of native shrubs and trees now flourish.

Activity URL: www.partnershipresourcecenter.org

Contact:

Pete Barrell, Siuslaw Watershed Council, 541-268-3044 (phone & fax)



Conservation Effects Assessment Program USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Nationwide

Description of activity: The Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) began in 2003 as a multi-agency effort to quantify the environmental benefits of conservation practices used by private landowners participating in selected U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) conservation programs. Project findings and results will be used to report progress on the environmental effects of these programs, aid discussions on conservation policy development, guide conservation program implementation, and ultimately, help farmers and ranchers make informed conservation choices. CEAP will assess the benefits of conservation practices associated with the following USDA conservation programs in the 2002 Farm Bill: Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Conservation Security Program (CSP), Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), NRCS Conservation Technical Assistance Program, and Grassland Reserve Program (GRP). Conservation practices that will be assessed include conservation buffers; erosion control; wetlands conservation and restoration; establishment of wildlife habitat; and management of grazing land, tillage, irrigation water, nutrients, and pests.

CEAP focuses on developing approaches, methodologies, and databases to produce scientifically credible estimates of environmental benefits of conservation. Eventually CEAP will assess benefits to water quality, soil quality, water conservation and wildlife habitat on cropland, grazing land, and wetlands. Work is underway to develop suitable and affordable analytical approaches for these other land uses and natural resource concerns. NRCS CEAP produced a series of bibliographies and reports that explain recent scientific results covering environmental effects of conservation practices. This information is useful in designing both policies and on-the-land conservation systems that foster practical and environmentally sound conservation practices.

More than \$2.5 million has been awarded to five land grant universities to develop research, educations, and extension projects aimed at improving the quality of water resources in agricultural watersheds. This joint effort responds to a need to conduct research that: 1) evaluates the impacts of interactions among conservation practices and their biophysical setting on water quality at the watershed scale; and 2) evaluates social and economic factors influencing implementation and maintenance of practices. CEAP also responds to a need to conduct outreach education to transfer knowledge from this research to farmers, ranchers, community leaders, and other stakeholders.

Interagency partners: USDA Agricultural Research Service; USDA Cooperative State Research; Education and Extension Service (CSREES); USDA Economic Research Service (ERS); USDA Forest Service; USDA Office of Risk Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis; U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, USDA Farm Service Agency, USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, NOAA, and NASA

Local partners: Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Soil and Water Conservation Society, The Nature Conservancy, and The Wildlife Society

Activity URL: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Technical/nri/ceap/>

Pictures available? Yes

Activity contact(s): Wayne Maresch 301-504-2311

San Joaquin Valley Farmers' Air Quality Initiative USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: San Joaquin Valley, California

Description of activity:

A new air quality initiative for San Joaquin Valley farmers was announced in FY 2007. This new three-year initiative combines technical and cost share assistance through NRCS. The Agency will oversee the initiative using both conservation technical assistance as well as EQIP, which shares the cost of structures and practices that farmers undertake to protect natural resources. NRCS made funding available in August 2007 to fund a portion of California's backlog of eligible applications to voluntarily improve air quality. Since the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) and the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District will soon be requiring agricultural growers to reduce on-farm emissions of smog-producing Volatile Organic Compounds (Voss), this is a timely initiative as there is a heightened need to help producers meet the mandate.

Interagency partners: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, State Technical Committee, California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR), San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

Contact:

Pete Barrell, Siuslaw Watershed Council, 541-268-3044 (phone & fax)



Conservation Effects Assessment Program USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Nationwide

Description of activity: The Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) began in 2003 as a multi-agency effort to quantify the environmental benefits of conservation practices used by private landowners participating in selected U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) conservation programs. Project findings and results will be used to report progress on the environmental effects of these programs, aid discussions on conservation policy development, guide conservation program implementation, and ultimately, help farmers and ranchers make informed conservation choices. CEAP will assess the benefits of conservation practices associated with the following USDA conservation programs in the 2002 Farm Bill: Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Conservation Security Program (CSP), Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), NRCS Conservation Technical Assistance Program, and Grassland Reserve Program (GRP). Conservation practices that will be assessed include conservation buffers; erosion control; wetlands conservation and restoration; establishment of wildlife habitat; and management of grazing land, tillage, irrigation water, nutrients, and pests.

CEAP focuses on developing approaches, methodologies, and databases to produce scientifically credible estimates of environmental benefits of conservation. Eventually CEAP will assess benefits to water quality, soil quality, water conservation and wildlife habitat on cropland, grazing land, and wetlands. Work is underway to develop suitable and affordable analytical approaches for these other land uses and natural resource concerns. NRCS CEAP produced a series of bibliographies and reports that explain recent scientific results covering environmental effects of conservation practices. This information is useful in designing both policies and on-the-land conservation systems that foster practical and environmentally sound conservation practices.

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Interagency partners: USDA Agricultural Research Service; USDA Cooperative State Research; Education and Extension Service (CSREES); USDA Economic Research Service (ERS); USDA Forest Service; USDA Office of Risk Assessment and Cost-Benefit Analysis; U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, USDA Farm Service Agency, USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, NOAA, and NASA

Local partners: Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Soil and Water Conservation Society, The Nature Conservancy, and The Wildlife Society

Activity URL: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Technical/nri/ceap/>

Pictures available? Yes

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Interagency partners: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, State Technical Committee, California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR), San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

Local partners: Madera County Farm Bureau, Nisei Farmers League, Kings County Farm Bureau, Fresno County Farm Bureau, California Cotton Growers Association, Western United Dairymen, Kern County Farm Bureau, Tulare County Farm Bureau, Merced County Farm Bureau, San Joaquin County Farm Bureau, Stanislaus County Farm Bureau, Fresno County Farm Bureau

Activity URL: N/A

Pictures available? No

Activity contact(s): John Dondero 202-720-4209

Water Quality Improvement Project in the Great Lakes Region USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Great Lakes Region

Description of activity: Long-term water quality monitoring by USDA and its partners shows that the Maumee River is the largest single contributor of non-point source pollution in the Western Lake Erie Basin. The high sediment load in the Maumee is due to the size of the watershed and the high percentage of the watershed that is in intensively cultivated cropland. The Maumee River has the largest drainage area of any of the Great Lakes tributaries, draining more than 4.2 million acres in Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan. It provides water to metropolitan Toledo, Ohio, and Fort Wayne, Indiana.

A partnership of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and Heidelberg College has identified conservation tillage and buffers, nutrient and manure management planning, wetland restoration, and controlled drainage as conservation practices that can reduce the amount of nutrients that enter Lake Erie through the Maumee River. NRCS is carrying out resource assessments along the Blanchard River, one of the Maumee River's major contributing streams, which will aid the development of watershed management plans that will include the conservation practices listed above. These assessments will be completed in fiscal year 2008 and will guide the implementation of Farm Bill conservation programs along the river for 10 years.

Partnerships: Collaboration and partnership are central to the project and its future success. Partners include: NRCS, ARS, USGS, the National Center for Water Quality Research at Heidelberg College, The Conservation Action Project, Ohio Farm Bureau Federation; Blanchard River Watershed Partnership, The Nature Conservancy, Pheasants Forever, many Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Michigan and Indiana Departments of Agriculture, private consultants, and participating farmers.

URL: Information on the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force can be found on-line at:
<http://epa.gov/greatlakes/collaboration/taskforce/index.html>.

Information on the Great Lakes Initiative can be found on-line at:
<http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/gli/>

Photos available? No

Local partners: Madera County Farm Bureau, Nisei Farmers League, Kings County Farm Bureau, Fresno County Farm Bureau, California Cotton Growers Association, Western United Dairymen, Kern County Farm Bureau, Tulare County Farm Bureau, Merced County Farm Bureau, San Joaquin County Farm Bureau, Stanislaus County Farm Bureau, Fresno County Farm Bureau

Activity URL: N/A

Pictures available? No

Activity contact(s): John Dondero 202-720-4209

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Information on the Great Lakes Initiative can be found on-line at:
<http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/gli/>

Photos available? No

Contact: Dan Lawson (NRCS) 202-720-5322; Jan Surface (NRCS) 202-690-3501

Source Water Protection Program USDA, Farm Service Agency

Geographic location or area of activity: 38 states

Description of activity:

- The SWP was expanded to 38 States and 110 plans were completed including 384 public drinking water sources (311 public water supply wells and 73 surface intakes).

The Source Water Protection Program, a joint project by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the nonprofit National Rural Water Association (NRWA), is designed to help prevent source water pollution in 38 states through voluntary practices installed by producers as local levels.

Source water is surface and ground water that is consumed by rural residents. According to the NRWA, ground water is the primary source of drinking water for some 44,000 communities in the United States.

Interagency partners:

Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin

Local partners (Local government, community groups, nonprofits, other entities)

Working with State Rural Water Associations, technicians will also facilitate the creation of local teams comprised of citizens with diverse backgrounds from federal, state, local, and private entities. These teams will collaborate in the development of Rural Source Water Protection plans that promote clean ground water.

Activity url: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=swp>

Pictures available? NO

Activity contact: John Carter, 720-8774

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program USDA Farm Service Agency

Geographic location or area of activity: Currently there are CREP contracts on 41 CREP Agreements in 31 states.

Description of activity:

- A new Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Agreement (CREP) was developed for the Arkansas Cache River/Bayou DeView watersheds to establish or restore wetlands and riparian forest buffers by planting hardwood trees.
- We also signed a new CREP Agreement for the drinking water supply for Tulsa to establish riparian buffers and filterstrips to reduce the flow of nutrients, sediment, and other pollutants in Oklahoma's Spavinaw Lake and Illinois River/Lake Tenkiller watersheds.
- With our partners, we modified five CREP Agreements with Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, and Wisconsin.

CREP is a community-based, results-oriented effort that focuses on local participation and leadership. A component of USDA's Conservation Reserve Program, CREP is a voluntary land enrollment program that helps agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat and safeguard ground and surface water. Partnering with tribal, state and federal governments and, in some cases, private groups, USDA establishes contracts with agricultural producers to retire highly erodible and other sensitive cropland and pastureland. During the 10- to 15-year contract period, participants convert enrolled land to grass, trees, wetlands, wildlife cover and other conservation uses. CREP supports increased conservation practices such as filter strips and forested buffers, which help protect streams, lakes and rivers from sedimentation and agricultural runoff.

Interagency partners

Through CREP, USDA partners with states, agricultural producers, non-government organizations and many others to protect the Chesapeake Bay, New York City's drinking water supply, Kentucky's Mammoth Cave, salmon habitat in the Pacific Northwest, the Illinois and Minnesota Rivers, and numerous other ecologically sensitive areas. CREP maintains clear goals and requires annual monitoring, enabling participants to measure progress and ensure success. By combining USDA's Conservation Reserve Program resources with state, tribal and private programs, CREP provides farmers and ranchers with a sound financial package for conserving and enhancing natural resources.

Local partners: See above

Activity url: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=cep>

Pictures available? Yes

Activity contact(s): Lana Nesbit, 720-8772

**Forestry Cooperation in Arizona National Forests
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service**

Geographic location or area of activity: Arizona

Description of activity: NRCS and Forest Service (FS) have always encouraged Coordinated Resource Management on the intermingled private, State, Federal, and tribal land ownership in Arizona to improve resource management and to solve problems.

NRCS and FS piloted the EQIP on Arizona's Tonto National Forest in 2004. The pilot project was initiated with the support of the State Technical Committee, the Gila County Cattle Growers, the Arizona Cattle Growers, the National Cattleman's Beef Association, NRCS former Chief Bruce I. Knight, and Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Mark Rey.

The pilot project allowed EQIP cost-share funds to be used on any part of a ranching operation being managed under a Coordinated Resource Management plan. NRCS also signed agreements with the University of Arizona, the Arizona Cattle Growers, and the Arizona Association of Conservation Districts to help develop case studies on selected ranches across Arizona that represent a variety of land ownerships, vegetation types, and grazing issues.

In 2006, the pilot project was expanded to all national forests in Arizona. As a result of this three-year cooperative effort, NRCS and FS have worked with ranchers and other partners to develop coordinated resource management plans on more than 1 million acres of grazing lands. Forty-seven coordinated resource management plans were developed over three years, and more than \$5.6 million in EQIP funds have been obligated.

Numerous NRCS field office and FS Ranger District staff provided the daily cooperative work to accomplish this effort.

Interagency partners: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Forest Service, State of Arizona

Local partners: Arizona Conservation Districts, State Technical Committee, Gila County Cattle Growers, Arizona Cattle Growers, National Cattleman's Beef Association

Activity URL: N/A

Pictures available? Yes

Activity contact(s): Andy Mason (NRCS), 202 -720-2308, andrew.mason@wdc.usda.gov
Stephanie Bertaina (USFS), 202-205-0933, sbertaina@fs.fed.us

The Public Lands Partnership USDA Forest Service

Geographic location or area of activity: West Central Colorado

Description of Activity: The Public Lands Partnership (PLP) was formed in 1992 as an informal forum to address public land issues in west central Colorado. The Public Lands Partnership is currently recognized as a positive model for community-based collaboration, and has shown that involvement of community interests, resources, knowledge and values can improve land-management decisions. Their success was not haphazard, but built purposively.

As a founding member of the partnership once stated, “We called ourselves the ‘radical middle’ and we were very purposeful in reaching out to different people.” This commitment to inclusive, collaborative involvement of diverse stakeholders has led to numerous accomplishments including: supporting major investments in the local economy through service contracting of habitat and fuels restoration treatments; leading community-based monitoring; sponsoring demonstration field trips that promote community education, and helping to support and diffuse challenges to Forest Plan revision. This impressive work was recognized by the Rocky Mountain Region with the 2006 Rocky Mountain Region Regional Forester’s Honor Award, and then in September of 2007, the PLP received both the U.S. Forest Service Chief’s Honor Award and the USDA Secretary’s Honor Award for “Protecting and Enhancing the Nation’s Natural Resource Base and Environment.”

Interagency Partners: Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests (GMUG), Bureau of Land Management, Uncompahgre Field Office, Colorado Division of Wildlife

Local Partners: City of Delta, City of Montrose, San Miguel County, Ouray County, Montrose County, Delta County

Activity URL: <http://www.plp4co.org/>

Activity Contact: Bill Steele, Coordinator, wrsteele01@msn.com



From left to right: Abigail Kimbell, Forest Service Chief; Mary Chapman, Public Lands Partnership; and Rick Cables, Regional Forester for the Rocky Mountain Region.

Technical Assistance to Tribal Conservation Districts USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Minnesota, Oklahoma, California, and throughout Indian Country nationwide.

Description of activity: The Secretary of Agriculture has signed mutual agreements with 29 conservation districts formed under Tribal law. Under these agreements, NRCS provides technical assistance through conservation districts to plan, apply, and maintain conservation treatments. The most recent additions are the Wind River of Minnesota and Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma. The Central Valley Tribe and the Hoopa Valley Tribe, both of California, are in the process of establishing tribal conservation districts. Under the terms of these agreements, NRCS provides technical assistance through conservation districts to assist American Indian Nations and Alaska Native organizations and citizens to plan, apply, and maintain conservation systems. In fiscal year 2007, NRCS approved 409 American Indian/Alaska Native EQIP contracts totaling \$17.3 million.

Interagency partners: USDA NRCS, The Central Valley Tribe, The Hoopa Valley Tribe, Wind River Tribe, Kiowa Tribe

Local partners: N/A

Activity URL: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/tribalgov/>

Pictures available? Yes

Activity contact(s): Edith Morigeau, Tribal Government Relations Coordinator, (202) 690-2152

Southeastern Silvopastural Initiative USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Southeast (GA, FL, AL, SC, MS)

Description of activity: In 2000 the USDA National Agroforestry Center dedicated the primary staff time of one technology transfer specialist to solicit support from its conservation partners, to identify barriers to implementation, and develop the technology transfer program targeted principally for Georgia, Florida, Alabama, South Carolina, and Mississippi. The resulting targeted technology transfer program provided:

- 12 technical training sessions to over 500 agency personnel and about 50 consultants;
- 15 landowner workshops or field days;
- 8 silvopasture demonstration plantings in 5 states;
- An estimated 10,000 acres of new silvopastures established across the south
- Grants supporting CRP to Silvopasture demonstration four States, and a cooperative venture with the Federation of Southern Cooperatives and the Alabama Forestry Commission;

- Increased emphasis on silvopasture at universities, particularly 1890 Universities, and agency programs researching and promoting goat-silvopasture for limited resource farmers.

Interagency partners:

- USDA NRCS - Central National Technical Support Center
- USDA Forest Service
- USDA National Agroforestry Center, Normal, Alabama
- Georgia Forestry Commission
- Mississippi Forestry Commission

Local partners: N/A

Activity URL: N/A

Pictures available? Yes

Activity contact(s): Andy Mason (NRCS), 202 -720-2308, andrew.mason@wdc.usda.gov
Stephanie Bertaina (USFS), 202-205-0933, sbertaina@fs.fed.us

The National Plant Data Center USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: 90 percent nationally and 10 percent globally

Description of activity: The National Plant Data Center (NPDC) acquires, develops, improves, and disseminates plant information to support NRCS and other efforts to improve the ecological health of the land. The PLANTS Database provides standardized information about the vascular plants, mosses, liverworts, hornworts, and lichens of the U.S. and its territories. It includes names, plant symbols, checklists, distributional data, species abstracts, characteristics, images, crop information, automated tools, onward Web links, and references. This information primarily promotes land conservation in the United States and its territories, but academic, educational, and general use is encouraged. PLANTS reduces government spending by minimizing duplication and making information exchange possible across agencies and disciplines. The NPDC has updated over 25,000 records, added over 5,000 images, updated U.S. plant nativity, and integrated 90,000 plant records for Alaska borough distribution. Most of these are vascular plants of the U.S., and many are agriculturally important. PLANTS has county distribution data for 50 states. PLANTS receives over 50,000 user sessions each day, plus provides data to support other agency and organization applications across the nation and globally.

Interagency partners: USDA NRCS, EPA, Smithsonian, Institution-National Museum of Natural History, U. S. Army Corp of Engineers, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA Forest Service, USDA Rural Development, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, National Park Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Local partners: Kansas State University, Bishop Museum, University of Kansas, Oregon State University, Southern University, Yale University, Louisiana State University, Missouri Botanical Garden, University of Florida, San Francisco State University, and others.

Activity URL: <http://plants.usda.gov>

Pictures available? Yes

Activity contact(s): scott.peterson@la.usda.gov

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Nationwide competitive grants program.

Description of activity: In FY 2007 NRCS awarded more than \$19.3 million in Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) to 36 states to fund 51 projects designed to develop and refine cutting-edge technologies and approaches that can help producers maintain viable agricultural operations. CIG accelerates development, transfer and adoption of promising new technologies and approaches to some of the Nation's most pressing natural resource concerns. CIG benefits agricultural producers and consumers by providing more options and possibilities for environmental enhancement.

CIG funds pilot projects and conservation field trials that can last from one to three years. The total value of the approved projects is about \$45 million after the grantees match of at least 50 percent. Grants for approved projects cannot exceed 50 percent of the total project cost and the federal contribution for a single project cannot exceed \$1 million.

As part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service administers CIG, which provides competitive grants to state and local governments, tribes, non-governmental organizations and individuals to promote the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies. Applicants from 47 states submitted 171 CIG project proposals and requested CIG grants totaling about \$61.7 million.

This fiscal year's grantees include three resource conservation and development councils, two conservation districts, five state and local governments, 16 non-governmental organizations, 12 colleges and universities, one tribe, nine business entities and three individuals.

Approved projects address traditional natural resource issues concerning agriculture such as water quantity, water quality improvement, livestock nutrient management, grazing lands and forest health, and soil resource management. Approved projects also address emerging natural resource issues including agricultural air emissions, energy conservation and market-based approaches to conservation.

USDA allocated more than \$2 million to address natural resource concerns in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. This 64,000 square-mile watershed covers parts of Delaware, Maryland, New

York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia. These states will use the funding to carry out diverse projects to address water quality and other priority natural resource concerns.

As part of its outreach efforts, USDA will fund four proposals valued at \$1.2 million to help tribes and limited resource producers in eight states to address natural resource issues as well as energy efficiency and market-based approaches.

NRCS State Conservationists can elect to use up to 5 percent of their state EQIP allocation to run a state component of CIG. In FY 2007, 24 states and the Caribbean and Pacific Basin Areas administered a state component of CIG. About \$6.7 million was awarded to about 125 projects in these states. The intent of the State Component is to provide flexibility to NRCS State Conservationists to target CIG funds to individual producers and smaller organizations that may possess promising innovations, but may not compete well on the larger scale of the national grants competition. The federal contribution for a state level project can not exceed \$75,000.

Interagency partners: See above.

Local partners: See above.

Activity URL: www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig

Pictures available? No

Activity contact(s): Tessa Chadwick (NRCS), CIG Program Manager, (202) 720-2335
tessa.chadwick@wdc.usda.gov

National Agroforestry Visual Simulation Kit USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: National

Description of activity: The USDA National Agroforestry Center (NAC) has developed and delivered the *Visual Simulation Kit* for creating visual simulations of agroforestry and conservation proposals. This kit consists of the *Visual Simulation Guide* the *CanVis* image editing software, and self-paced *Training Modules*. NAC worked with the Nebraska FS to beta test the Kit, and in June 2006 Alcorn State University and the Mississippi Forestry Commission hosted two trainings to evaluate the pre-requisite self-paced training modules. Other accomplishments and utilization include: 7 training sessions for natural resource professionals; NRCS approval of CanVis on its Common Computing Environment; The Mississippi Urban Forestry Council's highlight of the Kit during training of 500 Master Urban Foresters in 2007; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration use of CanVis with its coastal zone manager partners. Over 2,000 copies have been requested and will be distributed to among other partners, including: Southern and Auburn Universities; Trees Forever for community development projects; numerous RC&Ds, communities, conservation districts and counties from all fifty states and U.S. territories.

Interagency partners: (Federal, State, and tribal government)

- USFS-USDA National Agroforestry Center, Lincoln, Nebraska
- NRCS-USDA National Agroforestry Center, Lincoln, Nebraska

- Nebraska Forest Service field staff

Local partners: (Local government, community groups, nonprofits, other entities)

- Walter Passmore / Urban Forester, City of Dallas, Texas (formerly with Mississippi Forestry Commission–Community Forestry, Jackson, Mississippi)
- Mid-America Regional Council, Kansas City, Missouri
- Mississippi Urban Forest Council
- Alcorn State University, Alcorn, Mississippi

Activity URL: N/A

Pictures available? Yes

Activity contact(s): Andy Mason (NRCS), 202 -720-2308, andrew.mason@wdc.usda.gov
Stephanie Bertaina (USFS), 202-205-0933, sbertaina@fs.fed.us

Land Between the Lakes Association USDA Forest Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Kentucky and Tennessee

Description of activity: The partnership between the Forest Service’s Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area and the Land Between the Lakes Association is among the most effective, innovative and mutually beneficial anywhere in the Forest Service’s Southern Region. Time and time again, the Land Between the Lakes Association has recognized the needs of the Forest Service and thus, the American public, and stepped forward to resolve difficult situations through special efforts that have saved the Forest Service significant funding or have stretched limited budgets to maintain existing services or to cover unexpected needs. Considering the reduced budgets of the last two years, the Forest Service could not have provided nearly the current level of public service at Land Between the Lakes without this partnership.

A few of the many recent innovative and creative examples:

- Co-developed and administers an innovative Environmental Education School Grant program, providing opportunities for over 3,000 students per year, over 40 percent of which are from economically disadvantaged families. This growing partnership includes Murray State University, Western Kentucky Homemakers Club, and Bicentennial Volunteers Inc.
- Made dozens of presentations to regional organizations and groups each year in support of Land Between the Lakes and offers community leaders and members of the public another “voice” sharing key messages of the Forest Service.
- Provides leadership and support of a volunteer program that now totals over 120,000 hours per year.
- At least once a year, they host and mentor other Forest Service units interested in development of a “friends” group or association.
- Focused fundraising efforts culminating in:

- \$30,000 grant from the National Forest Foundation for restoration activities in the Turkey Bay Off Highway Vehicle area
- \$30,000 in personal and corporate contributions to replace the seats in the Golden Pond Planetarium
- \$10,000 in personal and corporate contributions to support the Land Between the Lakes Environmental Education School Grant Program.
- Oversight and administration of \$100,000 in state Off Highway Vehicle grants.

This list is by no means complete, but it does offer a sense of how important the Land Between the Lakes Association is as a partner to the Forest Service. The Association is a shining example of cooperative conservation of this unique National Recreation Area.

Local partners: Land Between the Lakes Association

Activity URL: <http://www.lbl.org/Home.html>

Activity Contact: William Lisowsky, blisowsky@fs.fed.us

Florida National Scenic Trail - Nokuse Partnership USDA Forest Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Walton County, Florida

Description of activity: This partnership enabled restoration of the Florida Trail easement, recently acquired by the Forest Service at Nokuse Plantation. Another component of the project was the design, routing and construction of 16 miles of the Florida Trail in Walton County, Florida. Construction of the Florida Trail through restored longleaf pine wiregrass ecosystems at Nokuse Plantation will provide the public with a high quality recreational experience as well as environmental education opportunities. The restoration project involves removal of offsite pine species, prescribed burning, restoration of groundcover (including identification of local seed sources, seed collection, and seed distribution), planting of longleaf pine, and reintroduction of native keystone species such as gopher tortoise.

The Forest Service facilitated the creation of a network of partners to accomplish the goals described above. The partners have been actively initiating arrangements with other federal, state, nonprofit, and private partners in order to further leverage funds and to accomplish the project goals.

The Nature Conservancy, Florida Chapter, served as lead in planning, coordinating and implementing grant funded restoration activities, and provided scientific expertise to support environmental education initiatives.

Florida Trail Association served as the lead in routing, designing, locating and constructing 16 miles of the Florida National Scenic Trail. They also recruited and managed volunteers, facilitated community involvement and provided environmental education opportunities focused on youth.

Student Conservation Association volunteers participated in trail construction. The Department of Defense is allowing collection of wiregrass seed off of Eglin Air Force Base (local genotype) for the easement.

Florida State University's Florida Natural Areas Inventory Unit inventoried natural resources along the proposed Florida Trail route, facilitated biological reporting for the trail construction NEPA document, and identified diverse native groundcover populations to serve as seed source for restoration.

The National Park Service's Southeast Archaeological Center inventoried cultural resources along the proposed Florida Trail route and facilitated heritage consultation and reporting for the trail construction NEPA document. They also provided cultural resource expertise for environmental education programs.

The Nokuse Plantation planned, coordinated, and implemented the removal of off-site species such as slash pine, sand pine, and cogon grass. They utilized timber profits to fund prescribed fire, and groundcover and longleaf pine restoration activities within the Forest Service easement.

The National Park Service's National Trails Land Resources Program Center conducted all of the administrative lands work in support of the Forest Service's acquisition of the easement.

The Fish and Wildlife Service is funding some of Nokuse's ongoing activities through private landowner assistance grants.

This project serves as a model for partnership, citizen involvement and cooperative conservation. Construction of the Florida National Scenic Trail footpath and restoration/preservation of the scenic, natural and cultural corridor surrounding the trail ensures that visitors will have the high quality recreational experience envisioned by Congress.

Interagency partners: National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Local partners: Florida Trail Association, Student Conservation Association, The Nature Conservancy, Florida Natural Areas Inventory-University of Florida, Nokuse Plantation

Activity contact: Michelle Mitchell, michellemitchell@fs.fed.us

Mt. Hood Snowmobile Club Partnership USDA Forest Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Mt. Hood National Forest, Washington

Description of Activity: Since 1978, the Mt. Hood Snowmobile Club has worked with the Mt. Hood National Forest to establish a forest-wide snowmobile trail grooming program that serves the needs of not only the snowmobilers, but also the cross country skiers, snowshoers and dog mushers. This partnership illustrates the valuable rewards of cooperative conservation and partnership at the local level. Without their assistance, many winter trail opportunities would not be available.

A dedicated core of volunteers grooms approximately 400 miles of trails per year on the Mt. Hood National Forest. The volunteers have worked under a plethora of agreements over the years including a challenge cost share. Coordinating efforts on three Ranger Districts, their grooming committee schedules areas to be groomed on a regular basis. Other Forest special-use groups depend on the Club to assist with grooming for their events. These have included dog sled races, cross country ski competitions and snowshoe events.

The Club was responsible for the construction of the Skyline Snow Park Shelter, a heavily used facility. The club organized the donation of materials and construction of the shelter. They also constructed a large garage that houses their grooming machine at the site. Maintenance of the shelter is accomplished through summer work parties the club also organizes.

The Club organizes several work parties throughout the year to maintain and enhance the trail system. The Club's summer work parties improve trail conditions, maintain the clearances required for the grooming equipment and augment district capacity to meet the needs of increasing winter recreationists. Much of this work would not be able to be accomplished through district project funding.

The Club annually brings the joy of winter to children with cancer through their "Candlelighter" weekend, providing snowmobile rides and a celebration at the Skyliner shelter.

The Club has offered recommendations to the Forest and Districts on winter trail planning and development which allows the Forest to meet the needs of a variety of winter trail users. They access Oregon gasoline tax money for the grooming so the Districts are not faced with added costs of fuel to support the grooming service.

The Club works with many different user groups to improve the quality of events offered to the public on the mountain both through grooming and event support. These have included the Oregon Nordic Club, Oregon DogSledders, local retailers, outfitter guides and snowshoe groups.

Local partners: Mt. Hood Snowmobile Club

Activity url: <http://www.mthoodsnowmobileclub.com/>

Activity contact(s): Shelley Hakanson, shakanson@fs.fed.us

Initiative to Protect Native Cultural Artifacts USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Michigan

Description of activity: On Earth Day, NRCS signed an agreement formalizing the process for protection of native cultural artifacts and remains. This agreement between the USDA, NRCS, and the Michigan Anishinaabec Cultural Protection Alliance (MACPRA) is the first formal federal agreement with the MACPRA, for the protection of ancestral graves of American Indians found in Michigan and repatriation of tribal related cultural resources. The agreement expedites the removal of the resources and returns the resources to their protectors.

Interagency partners U.S. Department of Agriculture, NRCS

Local partners: Michigan Anishinaabec Cultural Protection Alliance

Activity URL: N/A

Pictures available? No

Activity contact(s): John Dondero 202-720-4209

Alabama Farm Energy Savings USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Alabama

Description of activity: Alabama Mountains, Rivers and Valleys RC&D provided a pilot program providing energy audits for 6 area farms. The six farms realized a potential energy savings of over 250,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity and over 34,000 gallons of propane per year, which equates to approximately \$70,000 in annual cost savings for these producers. The audits also recognized the potential to increase production in poultry houses, leading to the potential of over \$55,000 in additional income per year.

Interagency partners: NRCS

Local partners: Counties of Limestone, Madison, Lawrence, Cullen, Jackson, Morgan, Marshall, DeKalb

Activity URL: <http://www.tennesseevalleyrcd.com/>

Pictures available? Yes

Activity contact(s): John Dondero 202-720-4209

Outreach to Minority and Limited Resource Landowners in Arkansas in Forestry Cooperation USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Arkansas

Description of activity: Arkansas Conservation Partners is made up of several state and federal agencies that work together to assist private landowners of Arkansas with putting conservation on the ground. In this instance, these agencies and individuals collaborated to make a focused outreach effort.

For example, NRCS has worked to promote forest landowners' participation in EQIP. Now, 10 percent of EQIP funds in Arkansas are earmarked for forest landowners. Also of particular interest are efforts to reach out to Arkansas' minority and limited resource forest landowners. Working cooperatively, RC&D and Arkansas Forestry Commission (AFC) put on several workshops specifically targeting these landowners. This promoted trust between the landowners and the government and encouraged landowners to utilize the programs and services offered to them. Assistance given to minority landowners by the AFC more than tripled as a direct result of

these meetings. Because this program has been so successful, AFC created an Outreach Coordinator staff position to keep the Outreach program going.

Another development of this cooperation is a Revolving Loan Program for the cost share portion of Forest Land Enhancement Program and Southern Pine Beetle Prevention and Restoration Program payment. As result, the minority landowners' out of pocket cost was cut to percent with RC&D contributing the remaining 75 percent (the cost-share portion).

A 'Forestry for Women' program was also created. The ever growing number of women owning forest land and being first time decision makers created a need to provide specialized education and outreach for women.

Interagency partners: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Forest Service, Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts

Local partners: Arkansas Resource Conservation & Development Councils (Southwest Area)

Activity URL: N/A

Pictures available? Yes

Activity contact(s): Andy Mason (NRCS), 202 -720-2308, andrew.mason@wdc.usda.gov
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Cooperative Conservation in Missouri USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Geographic location or area of activity: Missouri

Description of activity: Since March 2002, through cooperation between the NRCS Missouri State Conservationist and the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), 10 soil conservationist positions have been established throughout the State. These 10 conservationists will focus on forest stewardship and wildlife management and will work directly with private land users and the Soil and Water Conservation District cooperators. Projects will include forestry, fisheries, wildlife planning, practice application, and conservation outreach activities. MDC provides \$300,000 per fiscal year to match NRCS funding. As a result of this unique collaboration, Missouri stands out as a national leader in State and Federal forestry and wildlife application through cooperative funding.

Interagency partners:

- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- USDA Forest Service
- Missouri Department of Conservation

Local partners: n/a

Activity URL: n/a

Pictures available? Yes

Activity contact(s): Andy Mason (NRCS), 202 -720-2308, andrew.mason@wdc.usda.gov
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Pollinator Protection **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service**

Geographic location or area of activity: Nationwide

Description of activity:

The results of the National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council's report on "The Status of Pollinators in North America" (i.e., evidence for decline in populations of a number of pollinators) released October 2006, and the occurrence of what has been identified as "Colony Collapse Disorder" (CCD) (i.e., disappearance of honeybees from hives) has brought much attention to the extremely important roles of pollinators and the need to ensure that their populations do not continue to decline.

In response to this need, NRCS has actively participated in, and facilitated cooperative efforts with other Federal agencies and non-governmental organizations. NRCS is an active member of the CCD Steering Team working with representatives from the Agricultural Research Service, the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Defense. NRCS Field Office staffs across the nation work with a variety of Federal, State, and non-governmental partners to encourage the protection and enhancement of pollinator habitat (e.g., inclusion of pollinator protection in the ranking criteria for receipt of program funds). At the national and regional levels, NRCS is doing cooperative work with the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign (which includes a number of Federal and state agencies, researchers and private entities) and the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation to better educate NRCS employees and the public about pollinators, their habitat requirements, and suggestions (on State and regional levels) of how to improve habitat. NRCS has been instrumental in identifying the need for, and facilitating, a coordinated approach among 11 USDA agencies from 4 Mission Areas to address pollinator protection. The first meeting of this group, held October 11, 2007, resulted in (1) some agencies realizing that they did undertake activities that affect pollinators, (2) agencies having a better understanding of the activities of the other agencies (particularly in regard to pollinators), (3) the identification of work by one agency that was about to be duplicated by another agency, and (4) the decision that this group should gather at least quarterly to continue cooperative efforts in regard to pollinator protection.

Interagency partners: Federal partners – USDA (Agricultural Marketing Service; Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service; Agricultural Research Service; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; Economic Research Service; Foreign Agriculture Service; Forest Service; National Agricultural Statistics Service; Natural Resources Conservation Service; and Risk Management Agency); Department of Interior (Bureau of Land Management, US Geological Survey, and National Park Service), Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Defense, US Botanic Garden, and Smithsonian Institute

State partners – A variety of partners within each State with which the NRCS State offices work with and members of the State Technical Committees (e.g., State Departments of Agriculture, Conservation Districts, State Departments of the Environment).

Local partners: (Local government, community groups, nonprofits, other entities) North American Pollinator Protection Campaign, Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, American Beekeeper Federation, Pennsylvania State University, and Purdue University

Activity urls: www.pollinator.org, www.xerces.org,
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/pollinators.html>

Pictures available? Yes (CCD working group meeting)
<http://www.beetography.com/gallery/2758754#146733652>

Activity contact(s): DOUG HOLY 202- 720-9096

Rangelands Cooperation – Sustainable Rangelands Roundtable

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

USDA Forest Service

USDOJ Bureau of Land Management

Geographic location or area of activity: National, Regional, & Local

Description of activity: The Sustainable Rangelands Roundtable (SRR) is an open partnership of over 75 federal and state agencies, tribal governments, academic institutions, environmental organizations, and resource user groups. Participants total more than 150 rangeland scientists and managers, ecologists, sociologists, economists, policy and legal experts, and industry representatives. All agree that rangeland resources, and the varied goods and services they provide, are of critical importance to the well-being of human and wildlife communities that depend upon them, as well as to the nation as whole. These partners have come together to identify indicators for standardized, periodic inventory and monitoring of economic, social, and ecological rangeland resources at national, regional, and local spatial scales, across public and private land ownership boundaries. Consistent inventory and monitoring information should enable Congress, agencies, and constituents to more accurately assess effects of conservation programs and management actions, ultimately improving agency delivery of effective, efficient land management actions and conservation programs upon which landowners depend for advice and assistance. In FY2007, SRR saw inter-agency completion of the first data collection field season of the Multi-Agency Oregon Pilot Project, with participation from BLM, FS, and NRCS. This pilot project is the culmination of a cooperative indicator-based monitoring implementation workshop convened by SRR in 2005. Eventual expansion of the Oregon Pilot, west-wide and nationally, is of critical importance to this Nation's rangeland resources. Other SRR activities conducted in 2007 included: rangeland ecosystem services workshops, publication of a conceptual model illustrating associations and feedbacks among social, economic, and ecological rangeland resources, a special workshop to address questions surrounding rangeland landscape pattern, loss of open space, and changes in land ownership; development of a system for assessing potentials of various rangeland goods and services for conservation incentives; and

creation of an economic, social, and ecological ranch sustainability assessment framework currently in a pilot phase with rancher's in Texas and Wyoming. Potential outcomes include improved coordination and cooperation among agencies and organizations, and enhanced resource allocations for rangeland management and science throughout the United States, as well as regionally and locally.

Interagency partners: (Federal, State, and tribal government)

- USFS-USDA
- NRCS-USDA
- CSREES - USDA
- BLM – USDI
- USGS – USDI
- CEQ - EOP

Local partners: (Local government, community groups, nonprofits, other entities)

- Colorado State University
- Ecological Society of America
- Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative
- Texas A&M Water Resources Institute
- Arizona State University, Consortium for Science, Policy & Outcomes
- Society for Range Management
- GOLD Consulting
- Idaho National Laboratory
- Mendocino Land Trust
- Oregon State University
- Bryant Consulting
- Wyoming State Grazing Board
- Wyoming Business Council
- University of Wyoming
- National Association of Conservation Districts
- Soil and Water Conservation Society
- Public Lands Council
- National Cattlemen's Beef Association
- The Nature Conservancy
- Western State Land Commissioner's Association
- Utah State University
- New Mexico State University
- University of Idaho
- University of California
- South Dakota State University
- Invasive Species Advisory Committee
- Hopi Tribe
- Chippewa Cree Tribe
- University of Arizona

- University of Nevada, Reno

Activity URL: <http://SustainableRangelands.cnr.colostate.edu>

Pictures available? Yes

Activity contact(s):

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Cooperative Conservation

Internal Activities for the FY2007 Annual Report

Implementation of 2002 Farm Bill USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Description of activity: The 2002 Farm Bill committed unprecedented resources—more than \$17.1 billion in funding over 10 years—for conservation. Since 2002, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has provided technical assistance to 1.1 million farmers and ranchers. NRCS has helped to apply conservation on more than 148 million acres of agricultural land. We've helped landowners and producers apply more than 23,000 Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans on 4.3 million acres. Since enactment of the 2002 Farm Bill, NRCS has invested \$8.8 billion of the taxpayers' funds in technical and direct financial assistance to landowners, producing high quality productive soils, a clean and abundant water supply, healthier plant and animal communities, cleaner air and a sustainable agricultural base. In addition, conservation partner organizations, including local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Resource Conservation and Development Councils, State and local governments and other conservation organizations, have contributed \$4.4 billion to conservation programs through FY 2007 for a total investment of more than \$13.2 billion. Working together, remarkable results have been achieved. NRCS continues to build upon this successful working partnership by focusing on a strategic plan which emphasizes cooperative conservation in meeting long-term Agency objectives.

Interagency partners: NRCS has reached out aggressively to establish formal relationships among key conservation organizations, universities, State and local governments and other Federal agencies. Some of these partners include the American Society of Agronomy, the Certified Professionals in Erosion and Sediment Control, Inc., the Society for Range Management, the American Forage and Grassland Council, the Wildlife Society, the American Fisheries Society, the Association of Consulting Foresters, the American Registry of Professional Animal Scientists, Iowa State University, University of Tennessee, the Irrigation Association, Validus, the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants, and the Society of American Foresters.

Activity URL: <http://photogallery.nrcs.usda.gov/>

Pictures available: Yes

Activity contact: DAN MULARKEY 202-720-3364

Partnership and Collaboration Training Modules USDA Forest Service

Purpose: The Forest Service is committed to raising the standards in how we work with others to jointly benefit the resources and people we serve. This means that employees need to be equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the challenge of being exemplary partners.

In addition, when partnerships reach the stage where formal documentation is necessary, many employees are challenged by the administrative requirements. The goal of these modules is to provide employees and partners alike with the essential tools and precautions needed to achieve vibrant, effective partnerships supported by sound business practices. With the skills and training acquired through these modules, employees will gain confidence and competencies necessary to fulfill their responsibilities and the Agency obligations that our partners expect and deserve.

Audience: These training modules developed from an expressed need among National Forest System employees. The concepts, theory and practice associated with these trainings, however, are broad enough in application to be meaningful to all Regions, Research Units, and State and private Forestry Areas. In addition, the content is highly applicable to our partner organizations and may provide valuable insight into how the agency approaches, develops and maintains formal and informal relationships. With all of this in mind, a flexible framework has been created that allows the modules to be adapted and tailored to fit particular situations, scenarios and needs across the U.S.

About the Modules: The training modules have been developed by Forest Service practitioners and experts in conjunction with some of our most valued partners. There are a total of eight modules available in sequential format. Some modules provide overviews and can be completed in approximately one hour, while others are designed for a one day session. Included on the Partnership Resource Center (www.partnershipresourcecenter.org) training web page is the entire package of modules (Power Point format), handouts, speaker notes, video clips and other supplemental resources to deliver the training in a classroom setting. Web links can be accessed to maintain the most recent version of documents. Suggested agenda options for presenting the modules in a group setting are also included.

The training modules are also available on AGLEARN, where individuals can view the modules at their personal computer. Taking the training through AGLEARN offers employees a way to certify their completion for inclusion in the corporate training database. Users can test their knowledge upon completion of the modules as well as provide feedback on the course and suggest revisions, or additions to future updates.

Contact: Debra Whitall, National Partnership Office. Ph. 202-205-0967, email: dwhitall@fs.fed.us

Developing a Collaborative Framework for Forest Planning: A Peer to Peer Workshop USDA Forest Service

Description of activity: This collaborative framework workshop helps Forest Service staff and communities make direct linkages between collaborative approaches and key components of the forest plan and the planning process.

The collaborative framework training is offered in a peer to peer fashion by USFS staff members who have demonstrated strong collaborative experiences in forest planning. The framework and training is place based and focuses on preparatory and diagnostic activities at the front-end of the planning process. The framework is based on approaches that many national forests are already pursuing, and which need to become as intentional as possible. This framework is built upon six fundamental strategies, themes, or areas of collaborative activity:

1. Assessing the local community or regional context. What is the social and political situation within which collaboration can occur?
2. Defining the primary collaborative principles and values that will guide the process. What is each management unit and community willing to emphasize or commit to throughout the planning process?
3. Inventorying and building the management unit's collaborative capacities. What are the unit's collaborative strengths and challenges in terms of personnel, time, skills, budget, and leadership support? What external assistance is needed?
4. Setting clear expectations about the collaborative process with all potential participants. What will collaboration address, what is the decision space, how will community or public involvement be utilized to formulate the plan?
5. Designing the overall collaborative process by choosing the engagements options that best achieve or accomplish the key steps and products required of the forest planning process. Where and how can the unit most appropriately and collaboratively engage the public to get the help it needs?
6. Monitoring the collaborative process in coordination with community participants based on the principles, values, expectations, and design choices previously agreed to. How successful is the collaborative process, and how can it be adapted to the evolving situation?

Primary Learning Outcomes:

- To facilitate a learning process through which national forest leadership and planning teams can produce a collaborative action framework, directly linked to their unit's social and management context;
- To assist national forest leadership and planning teams to select and design the most appropriate means of community collaboration within the overall collaborative action framework with the goal of producing the primary forest plan components, management strategies, suitability, special designations, and monitoring criteria;

- To build the capacity of national forest leadership and planning teams to target specific uses of collaboration methodologies through a series of assessment, diagnostic, and selection steps within the curriculum as per the characteristics noted below.
- To identify and describe the types of data and knowledge that communities and stakeholders can appropriately and effectively utilize in a collaborative forest planning process.

For more information contact Ashley Goldhor-Wilcock at (202) 205-9969 or agoldhor@fs.fed.us.