

NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Natural Resources Conservation Service
200 North High Street, Rm. 522 • Columbus, Ohio 43215 • Phone (614) 255-2471 • Web: www.oh.nrcs.usda.gov

Christina Coulon (614) 255-2471

USDA WILL RESTORE AND PROTECT FLOOD-PRONE LANDS IN OHIO WITH ECONOMIC RECOVERY FUNDING

COLUMBUS, March 10, 2009—U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will provide up to \$30 million to eligible landowners in Ohio through the floodplain easement component of its Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program, State Conservationist Terry Cosby announced today. The funds will be used to restore frequently flooded land to its natural state and create jobs.

Cosby also announced that eligible landowners can sign up for these easements from March 9 – 27, 2009, at their local USDA Service Center NRCS Office.

“We will be working with landowners who voluntarily agree to restore the floodplains to their natural condition by placing their land into easements,” Cosby said. “These easements will convert environmentally sensitive lands into riparian corridors and wooded bottomlands that are so vital for fish and wildlife habitat and to mitigate downstream flooding.”

Cosby said green jobs can be created in rural communities across Ohio when landowners establish conservation practices on the land entered into easement. Jobs will be created mostly in the engineering, biology, and construction fields when trees and native grasses are planted and the hydrology of the floodplain is restored.

The funding, obtained from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, includes both technical and financial assistance to restore the easements. All funds will be spent on targeted projects that can be completed with economic stimulus monies. The goal is to have all floodplain easements acquired and restored within 12-18 months.

The EWP Program’s floodplain easement component allows the NRCS to purchase easements on lands damaged by flooding. The restored floodplain will generate many public benefits, such as increased flood protection, enhanced fish and wildlife habitat, improved water quality, and a reduced need for future public disaster assistance. Other benefits include reduced energy consumption when certain agricultural activities and practices are eliminated and increased carbon sequestration as permanent vegetative cover is re-established.

Interested landowners can contact their local USDA Service Center NRCS Office for more information about the EWP Program floodplain easements during the sign-up. For information about EWP Program floodplain easements, please visit <http://www.oh.nrcs.usda.gov>.

#

Helping People Help the Land

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

