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USDA Announces Watersheds for 2007 Conservation Security Program

INDIANAPOLIS, September 26, 2006 – USDA's Secretary Mike Johanns today announced that 51 watersheds in 50 states, the Pacific Islands and the Caribbean Area have been nominated for the 2007 Conservation Security Program (CSP). These watersheds represent more than 64,500 of the nation's potentially eligible farms and ranches, covering nearly 24 million acres of cropland and grazing land.

The final list of selected CSP watersheds that will participate in the 2007 sign-up will be determined after Congress finalizes the agriculture appropriation. This list of nominated watersheds is based on the Administration's budget request for CSP for fiscal year 2007. Eligible watersheds are being announced now to allow farmers and ranchers adequate time to gather resource information on their operations in preparation for a prospective sign-up.

In Indiana, the Upper East Fork White watershed was nominated for participation. The watershed covers 519,331 acres in Bartholomew, Brown, Decatur, Jackson, Jennings, Rush, and Shelby counties and includes more than 1,300 farms.

"We are excited about the potential opportunity to reward farmers in the Upper East Fork White watershed for the great work they are already doing on their agricultural lands," said State Conservationist Jane Hardisty of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. "And we want these farmers to have their conservation plans in place so they will be ready when the selected watersheds are announced for sign-up."

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service began CSP in fiscal year 2004. Currently, there are 280 watersheds in CSP nationwide, covering nearly 224 million acres. In Indiana, seven watersheds have previously been funded for the program since it began in 2004.

CSP is a voluntary program that supports ongoing conservation stewardship on private agricultural working lands and enhances the condition of the nation's natural resources. Under this program, USDA rewards producers who practice good stewardship on agricultural lands and offers incentives to increase the use of conservation practices.

A list of the eligible watersheds can be viewed at http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/2007_CSP_WS.html. USDA offers CSP in new watersheds annually on a rotational basis in as many watersheds as funding allows.

For more information about CSP, including a map of the fiscal year 2007 watersheds and eligibility requirements, please visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp>.

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