



File Code: 3560

Date: March 27, 2009

Subject: Promote Conservation on America's Public and Private Lands

To: Natural Resources Conservation Service and Forest Service National Leadership Teams

As sister agencies in USDA's Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) Mission Area, the Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are uniquely positioned to promote conservation on America's public and private lands. Since early in the last century, both agencies have helped to shape the nation's stewardship ethic and to provide significant public benefits such as cleaner air and water, healthier soils, carbon sequestration, biodiversity, open space and, of course, food, fiber, feed and fuel.

We have worked together in many places around the country to assist farmers, ranchers and forest owners in sustainably managing their lands, but we believe we can do more. Acting Deputy Under Secretary Bartuska has expressed strong interest in seeing NRCS and the Forest Service work more closely under the NRE umbrella. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the new Farm Bill and President Obama's emphasis on energy and climate change, offer us great opportunities to jointly address these issues and, especially in areas where we work with the same constituents and partners.

With that goal in mind, we encourage agency leaders to express our shared commitment to conservation through jointly supported activities and events, where appropriate, throughout the year. Organizing volunteers to plant trees in local communities on Earth Day, for example, would allow us to share information about climate change, carbon sequestration and pollinator habitat, while also helping the environment. Other annual observances to consider for joint activities include Arbor Day, National Stewardship Week, National Get Outdoors Day and National Public Land Day.

As the nation's conservation leaders we are presented with a unique opportunity in our nation's effort to help stem global warming. While the time until Earth Day and Arbor Day is short, the opportunity to focus our collective resources is here. We urge you to jointly plan and hold tree and/or polliniser planting and other events where possible beginning Earth Day and Arbor Day 2009.

For more ideas, or to let us know about your events, contact Terry Bish at NRCS (202) 720-5974 or Thierry Curtis at the Forest Service (202) 205-1470.

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