



NEWS RELEASE

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AGRICULTURE SECRETARY VILSACK EXTENDS DEADLINE FOR FLOODPLAIN EASEMENT ASSISTANCE

Help for Landowners Hard-hit by Recent Flooding

WASHINGTON, March 26, 2009-Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that USDA is extending the sign-up period - until April 10 - for floodplain easement assistance, a component of the department's Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP). Up to \$145 million has been made available to eligible landowners nationwide through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and includes both technical and financial assistance. This funding will restore frequently flooded land to its natural state; create jobs in rural communities nationwide when landowners establish these floodplain easements; as well as restore and protect an estimated 60,000 acres of flood-prone lands nationwide.

"President Obama wants to make sure that landowners impacted by the recent flooding in states like North Dakota and Minnesota are given ample opportunity to apply for this assistance," said Vilsack. "This extension is part of USDA's plan to mitigate the impact of future flooding by restoring the landscape to its natural hydrology and native vegetation."

Floodplains 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 native vegetative cover is re-established.

All eligible landowners are encouraged to sign-up for the funding by visiting their local NRCS office. The sign-up, originally announced March 7, will close April 10, 2009. For eligibility requirements landowners should refer to the [Emergency Watershed Protection - Floodplain Easement fact sheet](#).

More information about NRCS and other conservation programs is available on the NRCS Web site at www.nrcs.usda.gov or at your nearest USDA Service Center.

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