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Subject: 2-8-06 eBlast from NRCS

Attachments: Fact sheet.doc; Walk-A-Mile applicatoin.pdf



February 8, 2006

UTAH TO PILOT WALK A MILE IN MY BOOTS PROGRAM

Utah is one of five states selected to pilot a new program that provides government employees and cattle producers with an on-the-ground work experiences in each other's respective professions. The average length of an actual exchange runs anywhere from 2-10 days. During the exchange, cattle ranchers can visit government offices, work on refuges, or in labs or even travel to national headquarters in Washington, D.C. Government employees have the opportunity to visit cattle operations and get hands-on experience working the ranch.



NRCS recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to join forces with NACD, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the Walk a Mile in My Boots Program. The award-winning program was initially launched by NCBA and FWS in summer 2003

An application form and information sheet are attached should be interested in participating or encouraging a producer to apply. For further information contact Public Affairs Specialist Ron Francis or Volunteer Coordinator Gayla Pressett.

For online information and application form, go to <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/volunteers/walkamile.html>. A link to this site has now been posted on the Utah NRCS Web site.

 **Periodic news reports from NRCS Utah**

To see blasts from the past go to [e-Blast archives](#)

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To submit news items or subscribe/unsubscribe to the mailing list, contact NRCS Public Affairs Specialist Ron Francis at 801-524-4557; ron.francis@ut.usda.gov

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Below is some general information from NRCS on the Walk A Mile In My Boots Program:

“Walk A Mile In My Boots” is a work-exchange program developed by the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The program is being expanded to include the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The program provides government employees and producers with substantive, on the ground work experiences in each other’s respective professions. Under the program, any producer or service employee may participate. Below are some background points for the program:

“*Walk a Mile in My Boots*” is expected to enhance the symbiotic relationship among government employees and agricultural producers through:

- Cultivation of relationships among government employees and producers that increase public awareness and support.
- Increased appreciation among government employees of rural lifestyles, agricultural production, and the economic pressures endured by agricultural producers.
- Increased understanding among producers of government agency and government employee conservation efforts and corresponding programs.
- Improved opportunities for producers, government agencies and government employees to voluntarily develop and implement effective conservation solutions that are viable alternatives to regulatory process.
- Exploration of opportunities to increase the sustainability of lands, natural resources and agricultural livelihoods.
- *Walk a Mile in My Boots* exchanges provide participants hands on opportunities to consider the conservationist – producer dynamic from both perspectives.
- “*Walk a Mile in My Boots*” improves communications, promotes synergy, and fosters greater understanding among the partners.

Below are some talking points regarding the participation of NRCS:

- Four NRCS employees and one agricultural producer have submitted Walk a Mile in My Boots applications to NRCS since we announced our intention to participate in the program via a national bulletin in October, 2005.
- Of the four NRCS employees submitting applications, two are from Arizona and two are from California.
- The one producer application received to date is from Arizona.
- All of the applicants have been interviewed by NRCS Walk a Mile in My Boots representatives and the logistics of NRCS’ first exchanges are being worked out.
- It’s expected that NRCS’ first Walk a Mile in My Boots exchange will take place in March, 2006.
- The Walk a Mile in My Boots committee, consisting of members from all four partner organizations, has been meeting since May of 2005 to develop the MOU, and to chart the course of an expanded Walk a Mile in My Boots work exchange program.
- Walk a Mile in My Boots will be a useful and valuable outreach tool as NRCS continues “Helping People Help the Land.”



APPLICATION FORM

Date: _____

FWS Employee: _____ NRCS Employee _____ Title: _____

Producer: _____ Type of Operation: _____

Applicant Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Fax Number: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Locations you would like to go (be as specific as possible):

If you have physical limitations, disabilities, allergies, or other circumstances that would prevent you from doing particular activities, please list those below (e.g. I am allergic to hay so I cannot do activities that involve hay; I had surgery on my knee and cannot walk more than ½ mile.)

What are your conservation goals?

What type(s) of activities / programs, would you like to experience or learn about?

(NOTE: Farmers, ranchers, etc. will be asked to complete a volunteer application form. Volunteers are provided with worker's compensation and tort coverage.)

AGENCY EMPLOYEES ONLY

Agency employees must provide this application along with a brief write-up which states what they hope to learn from this experience and how this will benefit them in their current or future position with the Agency. Additionally, list any costs associated with your participation.

Employee Signature

Date

Immediate Supervisor

Date

Authorized Agency Approval

Date

