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Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) & USA Rice - Ducks Unlimited Stewardship Partnership Offer Special Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) for Arkansas Rice Producers

Little Rock, Ark. – The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting applications for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) – USA Rice - Ducks Unlimited Stewardship Partnership – through the new Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). The application deadline is Dec. 30, 2016, for the first ranking pool.

RCPP aims to assist landowners and rice producers that voluntarily implement conservation and management practices that help to improve irrigation water management, control sediment and nutrient runoff, and provide waterfowl habitat on rice production lands.

New CSP updates include methods and software for evaluating applications designed to assist producers in determining if and when they are meeting stewardship thresholds. The tools allow producers the ability to pick practices and enhancements that work for their individual conservation objectives and see potential payment scenarios early in the process. NRCS encourages producers, through CSP, to adopt the cutting-edge technologies and new management techniques that include irrigation water management, precision agriculture applications, new soil amendments to improve water quality, and many others.

This special RCPP CSP sign-up is targeted for rice production acreage in 30 Arkansas counties. These counties include Randolph, Clay, Lawrence, Greene, Independence, Craighead, Mississippi, Jackson, Poinsett, Cross, Crittenden, Woodruff, White, Faulkner, Conway, Pope, Saint Francis, Lee, Monroe, Prairie, Lonoke, Pulaski, Phillips, Arkansas, Jefferson, Lincoln, Desha, Drew, Ashley, and Chicot. The project will provide a special CSP allotment of 48,000 acres to Arkansas rice growers.

NRCS operates under a continuous sign-up, however specific deadlines are used for ranking, contracting and funding. Additional ranking pools and deadlines may be established if more acres are available. Producers wanting to apply, should contact their local USDA field service center. To locate the local field office, visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/main/national/contact/local>.

People interested in the additional state or initiative-based opportunities the updated CSP will offer can find information on the CSP portal, located at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/csp>. This one-stop shop, which provides information to help producers determine whether CSP is right for them, will be continually updated as more information becomes available. Changes producers can expect to see include nearly double the enhancements and conservation practices offered and better reporting tools to tell producers the results of their conservation efforts on their land.