

FEATURE – USDA PROMOTES CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

INTRO: The U-S Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service wants the public to know about its efforts to help the environment. The USDA's Bob Ellison has more. (1:43)

USING THIS YEAR'S EARTH DAY OBSERVANCE ON THE NATIONAL MALL, THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE TOLD ITS STORY TO A NON-FARM AUDIENCE. N-R-C-S CHIEF DAVE WHITE SAYS THE NATION NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT EFFORTS TO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT.

Dave White, USDA NRCS Chief: We've got to get out and start talking to other groups, other people and urban audiences and let them know what agriculture, our farmers and ranchers and private forest land owners are doing voluntarily across the country.

WHITE SAYS N-R-C-S EFFORTS TO HELP AND MAINTAIN THE ENVIRONMENT ARE SPREAD ACROSS THE COUNTRY AND ASSIST A VARIETY OF PLANT AND ANIMAL SPECIES AND THEIR ECOSYSTEMS.

White: In 2007 for the first time in forty years, the Louisiana Black Bear is back in the Delta of Mississippi because of work that USDA did. We've got a large project to remove fish barriers so the Atlantic Salmon can spawn in internal areas. If you look at endangered species like the Bull Trout, we're working to restore that. We're working to protect habitat for the Sage Grouse. To keep the Ogallala Aquifer, to restore the Long Leaf Pine in the southeast. Across our country we have all kinds of private land conservation going on and it's all done voluntarily with the cooperation of our farmers and ranchers.

N-R-C-S WORKS WITH PRIVATE LANDOWNERS TO HELP CONSERVE, MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE NATURAL RESOURCES. THE AGENCY EMPHASIZES VOLUNTARY, SCIENCE-BASED CONSERVATION, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, PARTNERSHIPS, INCENTIVE-BASED PROGRAMS, AND LOCAL PROBLEM SOLVING. IN WASHINGTON D-C I'M BOB ELLISON FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.