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Funding Now Available to Renovate Shelterbelts

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist Eric B. Banks, Salina, announced the availability of fiscal year (FY) 2014 funding for Kansas agriculture producers to renovate shelterbelts and restore forested riparian buffers under the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI). Sign-up deadline to be considered for this FY2014 funding is **March 21, 2014**. Producers need to contact their local NRCS office to sign up. Producers are encouraged to sign up as soon as possible so all requests can be completed by the deadline.

"Producers of forestland play pivotal roles in protecting and enhancing natural resources," said Banks. "Our goal is to support projects that will improve the health of the natural resources on their land and bring the environmental and economic benefits of conservation to their local communities."

"The CCPI fits nicely into renovation and restoration efforts," said Larry Biles, State Forester, Kansas Forest Service, Manhattan. "Over 44 percent of the 43,436 miles of shelterbelts in Kansas are in decline and are no longer providing the benefits they once did. There is also a significant percentage of our Kansas streams that lack adequate management and forest cover which directly contributes to bank erosion and advanced sedimentation of our reservoirs, reducing water supply to the people of Kansas."

The USDA will provide \$684,000 in financial assistance in FY2014 for the CCPI projects in Kansas. These projects will be administered by NRCS and will work through the existing Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to leverage additional services and resources from the state forestry agency and other non-federal partners to implement conservation on working farms, ranches, and forest lands.

Any producers eligible for EQIP funding can participate in the program. In Kansas, socially disadvantaged, limited resource, and beginning farmers and ranchers will receive a higher payment rate for conservation practices related to CCPI. Additional CCPI information can be found on

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/ks/programs/financial/ccpi/>

For more information on CCPI projects and other natural resources conservation programs, please contact your local NRCS office or conservation district office. The office is located at your local USDA Service Center (listed in the telephone book under United States Government or on the internet at offices.usda.gov). More information is also available on the Kansas Web site at www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov. Follow us on Twitter @NRCS_Kansas. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.