



NEWS RELEASE

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Landowners, Ducks Unlimited and Soil & Water Conservation Districts Come Together to Stop Erosion and Improve Water Quality Along the Illinois River

Canton, IL—February 7, 2005 – Landowners in nine counties (Bureau, Marshall, Putnum, Peoria, Woodford, Stark, Fulton, Cass and Menard) along the Illinois River are eligible to receive cost share assistance to install multi-purpose soil, water and wetland conservation practices on their property. This is made possible through a special program, the *Illinois River Basin Water Quality Initiative*, sponsored by Ducks Unlimited in partnership with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Funding for Ducks Unlimited's *Illinois River Basin Water Quality Initiative* was provided through the cooperative support of Senator Richard Durbin as part of the 2005 Agricultural Appropriations Act. Commenting on the program, Senator Durbin said, "*I commend Ducks Unlimited, Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Natural Resources Conservation Service for taking the initiative to promote new innovative conservation practices through voluntary, incentive-based programs. I encourage Illinois farmers to take advantage of this unique opportunity to improve water quality and wildlife habitat on their property.*"

The *Illinois River Basin Water Quality Initiative* was designed by Ducks Unlimited to aid farmers in controlling the loss of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment from their land. According to Ducks Unlimited, cost-share and technical assistance is available from local Soil and Water Conservation Districts in the nine targeted counties to assist farmers who wish to use the following conservation practices on their farms:

- Managed tile drainage systems;
- Multi-purpose water and sediment control basins; and
- Created wetlands that capture run-off from cropped fields.

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Eric Schenck, Regional Biologist for Ducks Unlimited, says that landowners willing to install one or more of the approved conservation practices and demonstrate their use to other farmers in their county are especially encouraged to apply. According to Schenck, \$100,000 of cost-share assistance is available through the nine local Soil and Water Conservation Districts to help farmers install such demonstration practices.

With more than one million supporters, Ducks Unlimited is the world's largest wetland and waterfowl conservation organization. Since its founding in 1937, DU has raised more than \$1.5 billion and conserved nearly 11 million acres of critical wildlife habitat across North America. Wetlands are nature's most productive ecosystems, but the United States has lost more than half of its original wetlands and continues to lose more than 100,000 wetland acres every year.

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