



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Massachusetts State Office

451 West Street, Amherst, MA 01002
413-253-4350, fax 413-253-4375
www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Diane Baedeker Petit
413-253-4371

CONSERVATION LISTENING SESSION TO BE HELD IN NORTHAMPTON, MASS.

*U.S. departments of Agriculture, Interior, Commerce, Defense and EPA
seek public input*

AMHERST, Mass. (Sept. 22, 2006) — Mark Rey, U.S. Under Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and Environment, will host a public listening session on Cooperative Conservation and Environmental Partnerships on Friday, September 29 at 1:00 pm at the Hotel Northampton, 36 King Street, Northampton, Mass.

This listening session is one of 24 being conducted nationwide – one of two held in New England – to give citizens an opportunity to present ideas about incentives, partnership programs and regulations that could improve results and promote cooperative conservation and environmental partnerships. The meetings will help inform and guide senior federal officials in developing future policy proposals that build upon the success of cooperative conservation.

The meetings are the latest in a series of discussions the Administration has hosted since the President's Conference on Cooperative Conservation in August 2005. The conference identified three broad approaches to improving conservation results: promoting cooperation within the federal government, promoting cooperation between the federal government and others, and eliminating barriers to cooperation in existing policy.

Listening session discussion topics will include:

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- How can the federal government enhance wildlife habitat, species protection and other conservation outcomes through regulatory and voluntary conservation programs?
- How can the federal government enhance cooperation among federal agencies and with states, tribes and local communities in applying environmental protection and conservation laws?
- How can the federal government work with states, tribes, and other public and private sector partners to improve science used in environmental protection and conservation?
- How can the federal government work cooperatively with businesses and landowners to protect the environment and promote conservation?
- How can the federal government better respect the interests of people with ownership in land, water, and other natural resources?

Each person attending the listening session will be given an opportunity to make comments, which will be recorded and taken to Washington, DC.

More information on cooperative conservation is available at: <http://cooperativeconservation.gov>. For more information on the Northampton listening session, call 413-253-4350 or visit www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov.

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NOTE TO MEDIA:

Media are invited to talk with and ask questions of Mr. Rey about the Cooperative Conservation listening sessions in the Atrium at the Hotel Northampton from 12:30 pm to 1:00 pm before the session.