

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 15, 2004

**CONTACT:** Diane Baedeker Petit, Public Affairs Specialist  
413-253-4371  
[Diane.Petit@ma.usda.gov](mailto:Diane.Petit@ma.usda.gov)

## **Worcester County joins Patriot Resource Conservation & Development Area**

AMHERST, MA – U.S. Department of Agriculture Under Secretary Mark Rey has approved a request to realign Worcester County from the Berkshire-Pioneer Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area to the Patriot RC&D Area, effective immediately. This move affects Worcester County communities and groups that may seek federal assistance with natural resource conservation issues.

RC&D is a program of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service that promotes natural resource conservation, development, and use to improve economic activity, and to enhance the environment and standard of living in communities within a designated RC&D area.

"The realignment was requested by the Worcester County Conservation District, with support from the Berkshire-Pioneer RC&D Area Council, because district supervisors felt that Worcester County now shares more common interests and resource concerns with the Patriot RC&D Area," explained Cecil B. Currin, State Conservationist for NRCS in Massachusetts. "Such interests and concerns include development pressure on agricultural land and open space, as well as water quality and quantity."

The Patriot RC&D Area, formed in 2002, is Massachusetts newest RC&D area and encompasses Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Worcester counties.

Worcester County groups may now contact the Patriot RC&D coordinator for assistance: Stephanie Parrish, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, 319 Littleton Road, Suite 302, Westford, MA 01886, 978-692-1904, x4, fax 978-392-1305, [Stephanie.Parrish@ma.usda.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Parrish@ma.usda.gov).

RC&D areas are locally organized, sponsored and led. Each RC&D area is guided by an RC&D council whose members are recruited from the local community and empowered with leadership responsibilities. USDA provides technical and financial assistance through NRCS, while local sponsors secure additional funding and in-kind services for RC&D projects. For more information on the RC&D program in Massachusetts, visit [www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov).

###