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\$300,000 Available to West Alabama Landowners Interested in Forestry Initiative

AUBURN, December 11, 2015 – USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist Ben Malone announced a collaborative effort to reach forestry landowners will continue in West Alabama. NRCS Alabama will partner with the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, Federation of Southern Cooperatives (FSC) and the Limited Resource Landowners Educational and Assistance Network (LRLEAN) to provide assistance to forest landowners in 11 counties.

Landowners in Bullock, Choctaw, Dallas, Greene, Hale, Macon, Marengo, Perry, Pickens, Sumter and Wilcox Counties are encouraged to apply for Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs) and practices through the forestry initiative by January 15, 2016.



The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities (Endowment) was awarded a national Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) to demonstrate sustainable forestry technologies and create a support system and market access to historically underserved landowners in Alabama, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The grant is funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and matched by the Endowment. Grantees must work with producers and forestland owners to develop and demonstrate new technologies and approaches.

Several landowners have enrolled in the initiative and are working to preserve, restore and enhance forestland on their properties. Over the last two fiscal years, more than \$650,000 was obligated to fund 130 contracts in the 11 county area.

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“This partnership has been a success and we believe these investments help strengthen rural communities one landowner at a time,” said NRCS State Conservationist Ben Malone. “Land returned to healthy forests will have beneficial conservation and environmental impacts for years to come.”

At least 50 percent of the total cost of the CIG project must come from non-federal matching funds, including cash and in-kind contributions provided by the grant recipients.

Although applications are accepted all year, producers should submit applications by January 15, 2016 to ensure they are considered for this year’s funding. NRCS field offices are listed in the telephone directory under U.S. Department of Agriculture or on-line at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov>. For more information, contact the FSC (205) 652-9676 or LRLEAN at lrlean.5@gmail.com

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