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National Resources Conservation Service, Corps of Engineers will sign agreement for better service to Delta residents

MEMPHIS, Tenn., Jan. 14, 2004 – A partnering agreement between the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Arkansas and the Memphis District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will increase communication and cooperation to better enable them to serve the communities of the Arkansas Delta. The two agencies will sign the agreement just after the noon luncheon Jan. 16 in the Convocation Center at Arkansas State University, Jonesboro. The brief ceremony is planned in conjunction with the Arkansas Soil and Water Education Conference, also taking place at ASU.

The agreement also creates a joint Corps/NRCS team whose objective is to provide coordinated assistance to Arkansas communities that request federal assistance and to aid local interests in implementing more complete locally led solutions to resource concerns.

The team will focus on water resources problems in the delta portion of the State of Arkansas within the boundaries of the Corps' Memphis District. The team will allow the Corps and NRCS to more efficiently and jointly assess problems, and offer solutions from the array of programs and services each agency offers. It will improve the existing process in which the community contacts either or both agencies and each responds independently.

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The team is a local result of a national-level effort by the NRCS and Corps of Engineers to provide more efficient and effective services to communities.

The best solutions to water resource problems may include a combination of assistance from both agencies. In some cases the product provided may be a “program neutral” assessment of the problem that the community can use to seek assistance from other sources. The team will operate to foster increased communication and collaboration and not stifle existing communication on projects.