



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **USDA CELEBRATES EARTH DAY WITH OVER \$100 MILLION IN COMMUNITY WATER/WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE LOANS AND GRANTS**

WASHINGTON, April 22, 2003 – In recognition of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of Earth Day, Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced the selection of 45 rural water and wastewater community infrastructure projects in 29 states to receive investment funding totaling over \$105 million. The fund assists rural communities address health and environmental issues and promotes business development. This year's Earth Day theme, "Action for a Healthy Environment" encourages Americans to heed President Bush's call to be good stewards of the land and life around us.

"Today's investments will help protect our environment and improve the quality of life for many rural residents throughout rural America," said USDA Under Secretary for Rural Development Thomas Dorr. "President Bush has proclaimed 2002-2003 as the ["Year Of Clean Water."](#) The President's proclamation recognizes the importance of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Clean Water Act and called upon all Americans to serve by 'setting good examples of environmental steward-ship in our daily lives.'"

Funding for the projects is comprised of \$37.2 million in loans and \$68.3 in grants that will build and improve rural water and sewage systems enabling rural communities to benefit through cleaner water, recreation and wildlife resources. Included in the funding are Technical Assistance and Training (TAT) Grants and Solid Waste Management Grants. TAT grants go to nonprofit organizations to provide technical assistance and training to associations on a wide range of issues relating to the delivery of water and waste disposal services. Solid Waste Management grants are made to public and private nonprofit organizations for providing technical assistance and training to associations to reduce or eliminate pollution of water resources and improve planning and management of solid waste facilities.

"We must be vigilant in protecting our rivers, lakes, and streams from pollutants caused by improper treatment of wastewater," said Jackie J. Gleason, Washington State Director of USDA Rural Development. "We have a responsibility to future generations to be mindful of the way we treat our environment, that is why I am pleased to announce that we have chosen a wastewater system improvement project on the shores of Lake Wenatchee as our Earth Day project this year. Camp Fire USA, North Central Washington Council, will be making much needed improvements to Camp Zanicka Lache to protect the environment and the health of hundreds of children who attend the camp to learn about and enjoy that environment." A funding announcement by USDA Rural Development for the North Central Washington Council is expected today at an Earth Day celebration being held in front of the Wells House on the Wenatchee Valley College campus in Wenatchee at 4 p.m.

A complete list of the selected loan and grant recipients and projects can be found at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/newsroom/news.htm>

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. Rural Development is Rural America's Venture Capitalist. Providing equity, liquidity, and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. Further information on these and other rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/>.

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