

## **Chief Dave White's Talking Points**

### **Increasing the Adoption of the Management of Ag Drainage Water for Conservation Benefits – Partner Forum III**

This special effort was initiated in part as a result of the June 2010, Conservation Evaluation and Assessment Project Report on the Upper Mississippi River Basin

That report identified that nitrate loading from subsurface drainage was only reduced by 5% with the suite of conservation practices in place between 2003 and 2006. This pointed to the significant need for the greater adoption of the management of ag drainage water for conservation benefits, especially water quality.

The Phase I Team established in September 2010, led by former STC Bill Gradle, identified a number of recommendations of what we needed to do to have a meaningful impact in their final report.

Subsequent to that report, I initiated a series of Partner Forums to provide information on NRCS actions and take input and feedback from our partners. The previous meetings, in March and June of 2011, provided us with good feedback and direction.

The Phase II Team, or Ag Water Management Team, examined the Phase I recommendations and put together the Action Plan that the partnership had the opportunity to review and make comments.

The Phase II team has made some good progress in implementing the Action Plan. We will get a report on our progress later this morning. Some of the accomplishments achieved, with our partners' help, include:

- The National "Managing Water, Harvesting Results" Summit
- The follow-up to the Summit Outreach Strategy
- State Ag. Water Management Action Plans
- Special land suitable for drainage water management maps
- More consistent payment schedules for the Conservation Activity Plans and DWM practices
- The development of internal and external training opportunities

NRCS is committed to working with our ag and conservation partners to increase the adoption of drainage water management and derive the environmental benefits from that practice.

We all want to reduce the level of nitrates leaving the landscape in drainage water that impacts our nation's water courses all the way to the Gulf of Mexico.

NRCS is looking at all the tools and opportunities we have – technical assistance, programs, policy, Conservation Innovative Grants (CIG's) – the actions we need to take collaboratively to have success in reaching our goal.