



Watershed Working Lands^{1/} Summit: *Better Water Quality Through Better Government Collaboration*

A series of meetings entitled, “Watershed Working Lands Summit: Better Water Quality Through Better Government Collaboration” will be held over the next six months. These are working meetings, involving water quality and other natural resource agency leaders at the Federal, State and Local levels, together with appropriate participation by regional and national headquarters staff. The first summit will occur in **St. Louis, Missouri on June 22 – 24, 2004**. Subsequent summits are tentatively scheduled for Sacramento, California on **October 25-27**, and Baltimore, Maryland on **November 8-10**.

Meeting Objectives: Participants will explore opportunities to:

- Enhance their understanding Federal, State and Local agency programs and the forces that impact their decision-making.
- Share innovations.
- Understand the watershed protection challenges and opportunities in the States.
- Identifying gaps and barriers that stifle collaboration.
- Identify ways to better connect working land programs to protect watersheds and leverage resources.
- Improve the efficiency and efficacy of programs.

Scope: The working lands summits will focus on:

- Leadership principles, concepts and practices necessary for collaborative decision-making at the State level by Federal and State agencies, and sub-units of State government.

Key Topics: Participants will be provided concepts and methods for effective interagency communication, value-added negotiation, and outcome based decision-making. As a plenary group they will identify key gaps and barriers to collaboration. Later, they will join other agency leaders from their State to use the tools provided to begin developing strategies for collaborative decision-making

^{1/} Lands dedicated to the production of food and fiber, including cropland, grazing land, forestland, and lands enrolled in term retirement programs.

that fit the needs of their State. Case studies will be presented that demonstrate examples of agencies that have worked together to reach outcomes that would have been impossible without a collaborative effort.

Who Should Attend? Key participants will include leadership from Federal, State and Local units of government charged with the authority and responsibility for delivering programs, technical assistance and services to address nonpoint source and other natural resource challenges associated with working lands in every State, including:

State and Tribal Water Quality, Agriculture, Forestry, and other natural resource agency senior leadership and program managers.

USDA Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Services Agency, Agricultural Research Service, Cooperative State Research Education, Extension Service and State Food and Agricultural Committees.

USDI Bureau of Land Management, US Geologic Survey, and US Fish and Wildlife Service

Conservation and Natural Resource Districts and other sub-units of State government with authority and responsibility for working lands.

USEPA Headquarters and Regions (Senior Managers, Watershed Branch Chiefs, Nonpoint Source Coordinators and Agricultural Sector Contacts).

It is recognized that the decisions made by these agencies impact a broad cross section of entities. With that in mind, Tribes, other Federal and State agencies, and non-governmental stakeholders, having a vested interest in working lands issues, are also welcome to attend.

Ground Rules: The Summits will **not** be:

- An opportunity to listen to “talking heads” telling us *how it is*. The focus will be on *how things could be*.
- *A forum to criticize* any agency or its past administration of programs, without presenting a better idea that is in keeping with the mission and authorities of that agency.
- *A mandate for change* that conflicts with State statutes or agency missions, require additional funding, or don’t fit the unique characteristics and culture of the State.

Note: It is desirable, though not essential, that participants attend the summit in their geographic region, since the principles discussed at each session will be similar. However, it is important that those agencies determined to constitute a “Critical Mass” with regard to working lands in each State attend the same session. The makeup of this group may vary significantly, depending on the issues facing each State.

For further information on the Summit and registration see: <http://www.asiwpca.org/events/other.htm>.