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News Release

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New Program Promotes Farmers Helping Farmers

Lebanon, Pa. (June 26, 2007) – A coalition of foundations today announced a \$223,000 commitment to Lebanon county to help farmers improve the water quality of Lebanon County’s streams. The program aims to link experienced farmers who have successfully adopted conservation management practices to beginning “no till” farmers through a network of technical support and education to individuals.

The grant, provided over the next three years to the Capital Area Resource Conservation and Development Council by the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network, will integrate the value and knowledge of successful no-till systems into an effective farmer-to-farmer education, training and technical assistance model to reach farmers, utilizing experienced no-till farmers as a primary learning resource.

“Supporting leadership and innovation in our agriculture communities is the foundation to building strong partnerships for solving water quality problems,” said Keith Campbell, President of the Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment. “Lebanon County is pioneering this innovative effort.”

“This type of project can have a substantial impact on local farms by changing the way farmers approach no-till systems,” said Capital RC&D Program Manager Susan Richards. “By working directly with the farming community, this innovative approach will help reduce the amount of nutrients and sediment lost from local farms.”

Funding will be used to support farmers helping other farmers to adopt no till farming – a conservation practice that conserves soil and nutrients on the land by limiting disturbances during planting and harvesting operations. This ‘farmer to farmer’ mentoring program is designed as a model program to share more broadly new farming practices and techniques which will improve water quality and provide economic benefits to farmers through reduced

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The Chesapeake Bay Funders Network Agriculture Work Group

Agua Fund, The Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment, The Chesapeake Bay Trust, The Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation, Prince Charitable Trust, Town Creek Foundation, Wallace Genetic Foundation and the Western Pennsylvania Watershed Protection Program

Funds for Farmers to Promote ‘No Till’ Conservation Practice 2-2-2-2

labor, fuel and equipment costs. When implemented, the plans will reduce the amount of nutrients and sediments flowing into the local streams and the lower Susquehanna River watershed.

“Farming communities are built upon the tradition of farmers helping farmers,” said Del Voight with Penn State’s Cooperative Extension Agronomic Education program. “The Lebanon County “mentors” are reviving this successful approach and helping sustain the state’s great agricultural heritage.”

The Lebanon County pilot project is one of three agricultural community-based partnerships launched in 2006 by the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network. The partnerships promote the effective use of conservation practices to reduce excess nutrients in surface and ground water, in a regional effort to improve the health of local waters and the Chesapeake Bay.

The Lebanon-area collaboration is supported by the Capital R C&D Area Council, Lebanon County Cooperative Extension, County Conservation District, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the No-Till Sluggers Group (comprised of local farm producers) and the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network.

The Chesapeake Bay Funders Network’s Agriculture Initiative brings together grantmakers to leverage philanthropic funding with existing resources to promote healthy local waters and sustainable agricultural communities. The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science and the Center for Agricultural Partnerships coordinate the CBFN agricultural initiative.

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