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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Utah Prairie Dog Habitat Credit Bank Established by RC&D

Richfield, Utah – January 4, 2012 – The Panoramaland Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) is pleased to announce the development of the Utah Prairie Dog Habitat Credits Exchange Program “UPDHCEP” and the establishment of a Utah prairie dog habitat credit bank which allows developers and private landowners to purchase habitat credits, permitting clearance in perpetuity for development or sale of lands encumbered by the Utah prairie dog, a species listed as Threatened under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act. The UPDHCEP is one facet of a multi-pronged effort working towards habitat and species conservation and future delisting of the Utah prairie dog.

The UPDHCEP creates a market for the conservation of the species, speeds permitting time for developers and municipalities, reduces conflicts, and provides financial incentives for private agricultural producers to voluntarily preserve habitat through acquisition of conservation easements. These easements protect Utah prairie dog habitat in its current use as agricultural land and will sustain its continued use as pastureland in perpetuity.

The current mitigation system is extremely limited and inadequate in its ability to provide sufficient and timely clearance to developers. This innovative market-based recovery credit system for the Utah prairie dog will substantially advance recovery prospects for this species by facilitating private agricultural producer involvement and assigning the greatest credit to habitats with the greatest contribution to recovery.

The Panoramaland RC&D, in partnership with the Color Country RC&D Council and other participants from federal, state and local governments and private entities has worked over the last several years to create and implement the UPDHCEP. The NRCS has been extensively involved in the partnership providing financial support, planning and technical expertise.

For more information and a YouTube video visit the RC&D PRESS ROOM at panoramalandrcd.org or contact Erica Wightman, the UPDHCEP program coordinator at: updhceprogram@hotmail.com or at (435) 979-1984.

PRESS CONFERENCE: Monday January 9, 2012; 11 AM Cedar City, UT @ Heritage Center 105 North 100 East

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