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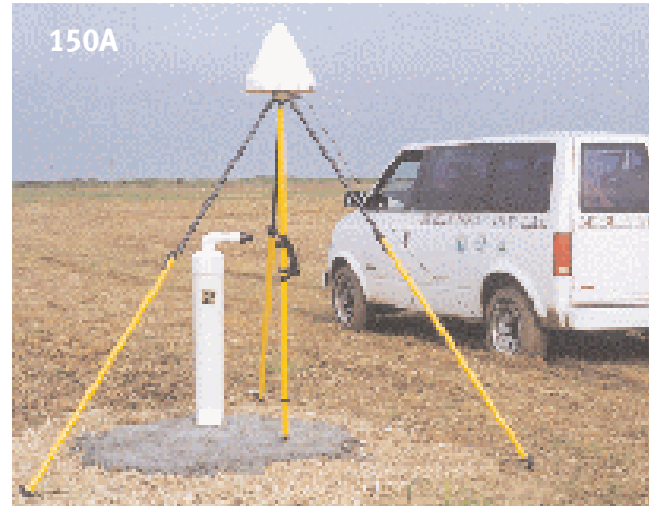
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## RAISE YOUR VOICE

YOUR FORUM TO REACT TO PUBLISHED ARTICLES, TO EXCHANGE IDEAS, AND DESCRIBE INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO CONSERVATION INCLUDING LEGISLATION

### The CEAP Debate

Dr. Peter Black's letter (July/August, 2005) questioning the value of evaluating conservation effectiveness motivated me to reread the executive summary of the Preliminary Findings from the Blue Ribbon Panel Conducting an external review of the USDA Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP). I believe the opinions of Dr. Black and the CEAP Blue Ribbon Panel to be dead wrong. We should not continue to pump money into conservation practices based simply on faith as Dr. Black asserts. Nor should we expect CEAP to provide valid conservation effects assessments in time for the 2007 farm bill debate as recommended by the Blue Ribbon Panel. Conservation, by definition, is a long term investment with long term effects. And of course we need to answer the Panel's question "What should we do next year?" But deciding what to do

next year requires answers to what I call the Katrina questions: "What went right?" and "What went wrong?"

—Jim Newman

*USDA NRCS Caribbean Area*

#### Readers are invited to express their views on land and water management.

Please make your letter less than 150 words. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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— Deb Happe, editor