More names announced for Obama transition team

By Sara Wyant

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President-elect Barack Obama’s transition team rolled out the names of several other key individuals yesterday who will help get the new administration staffed and operating. Co-chairs of the agency review process include: Melody Barnes, Lisa Brown and Don Gips. They will consult with an 11-member agency review working group, also announced yesterday.

David J. Hayes will head the working group for Energy and natural resources agencies, including USDA, EPA and Interior. Hayes served as the Deputy Secretary of the Interior during the Clinton Administration. As Deputy Secretary, he was second in command at Interior under Secretary Bruce Babbitt. Hayes has served in a variety of leadership positions in the environmental, energy and resources field, including Chairman of the Board of the Environmental Law Institute. He is the Vice Chair of the Board of American Rivers, is a Board member of RESOLVE and the Natural Heritage Institute and also is a Senior Fellow at the World Wildlife Fund.

Although USDA’s transition team leaders have not been formally announced, our sources say that Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) Commissioner Bart Chilton and former Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Associate Deputy Chief Carole Jett will likely lead the effort. However, it is not clear whether or not the Transition team’s legal staff will allow Chilton to continue to stay at CFTC while fulfilling this new role.

Chilton served in various positions at USDA from 1995-2001, rising to Deputy Chief of Staff to Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman. From 2001 - 2005, Chilton was a Senior Advisor to Senator Tom Daschle, the Democrat Leader of the United States Senate. After Daschle’s defeat, he served as an Executive Assistant to the Board at the Farm Credit Administration and then Vice President for Government Relations at the National Farmers Union.

Jett held a number of positions at NRCS, including coordinator for the 2008 Farm Bill, and was widely recognized as one of the most knowledgeable staff members on the inner-
workings of USDA’s conservation programs. She retired from her post as Associate Deputy Chief for Programs in May after 33 years of service. In recent months, she’s been actively working as an independent consultant on agricultural issues for the Obama campaign.

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