

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Dunkard Creek

WHY IS THIS WATERSHED SPECIAL?

Dunkard Creek, a major tributary of the Monongahela River, drains a rural 235 square mile watershed within nine townships in Greene County, Pennsylvania, and three districts in Monongahela County, West Virginia. The river is classified as a warm water fishery and historically supports a variety of fish, including small mouth bass, sunfish, and muskellunge in all but the lower 6.2 miles, which have been devastated by abandoned mine drainage.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

The Targeted Watersheds Grant will help address impacts from acid mine drainage, a serious problem that is shared by other communities with a legacy of resource extraction.

- High levels of metals, acids, and suspended solids can turn water orange and make downstream waters uninhabitable for aquatic life.
- A number of fish kills have been recorded due to toxicity in the water.
- Poor water quality directly impacts the area's economy by limiting recreational uses – tens of thousands of dollars in potential revenue are lost every year.

RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

EPA Targeted Watersheds Grant funds will enable the Greene County Watershed Alliance, in collaboration with Stream Restoration, Inc., to recapture an abandoned mine drainage area. They will:

- Demonstrate a passive wetland system, a cutting-edge technology, to remove metals and other pollutants. This system will have the capacity to remove fifty tons per year of suspended solids in the form of heavy metals, utilizing stream bank and channel restoration.
- A new hands-on environmental education program will showcase three acres of naturally functioning wetlands with about thirty native plant species as well as explain wildlife habitat and stream water quality improvements.

“The community is excited about cleaning up Dunkard Creek, because a clean and healthy watershed may spark interest in economic development. The tax base has declined tremendously, yet local taxes have tripled for the remaining property owners who want to make Dunkard Creek watershed their home.”

– Terri Davin
Greene County
Watershed Alliance



Dunkard Creek at twilight.

A STRONG PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE

The project was developed by a strong public-private partnership with a shared commitment to improve the Dunkard Creek watershed. A diverse coalition of seventy-six partners that encompass both Pennsylvania and West Virginia are working collaboratively to restore watershed health, including:

- Local landowners
- Business owners
- Community members
- Local, state, and federal government agencies
- Nonprofit organizations



Project partners celebrate a new beginning for the Dunkard Creek watershed.



High wall from an old, abandoned strip mine.

Dunkard Creek



EPA'S TARGETED WATERSHEDS GRANT PROGRAM

EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grant Program is a new, competitive grant program designed to encourage collaborative, community-driven approaches to meet clean water goals.

For more information about the selected watersheds, please visit:
<http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/initiative/>



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