



# News Release

US Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM)



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## Two Abandoned Mine Land Projects Are Praised By National Fisheries Experts

(Washington, DC) Two acid mine drainage treatment projects supported by the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) were recently recognized by the nation's leading aquatic conservation authorities as part of the nation's "10 Waters to Watch."

These projects are two of the National Fish Habitat Board ten projects it selects annually as the "best of the best" projects for their innovation, results, and effective partnerships.

The projects — Williams Run, Pennsylvania and Aaron Run, Maryland — are supported through the combined efforts of OSM's Watershed Cooperative Agreement Program and a coalition of government and private sector partners.

The Aaron Run project, near Frostburg, Maryland, stems flows of acid mine drainage into a tumbling mountain stream where conservation partners are re-establishing four miles of native brook trout habitat.

The Williams Run Project, about an hour north of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, works to restore nine miles of Appalachian stream for brook trout by treating acid mine drainage.

The projects are representative of waters across the country being improved through the conservation efforts of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan — an unprecedented state-led initiative to reverse persistent declines in aquatic habitat.

"Our approach — teaming federal, state and local partners — is helping to make these waters better... faster," said Kelly Hepler, the Vice-Chair of the National Fish Habitat Board, from the banks of the Potomac River at the National Casting Call, an annual event highlighting fisheries conservation and recreational fishing heritage. "By watching these 10 examples of our nation's conservation efforts, we can see real progress in treating the causes of fish habitat decline, not just the symptoms."

Both projects will treat drainage from abandoned coal mines to restore native brook trout to watersheds where the species has been extirpated for many decades. Financial and technical assistance are being provided by the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV), a regional partnership of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan.

“We are pleased that Abandoned Mine Land projects are receiving this recognition from national conservation experts,” said Brent Wahlquist, Director of OSM. “The States and Tribes have done a tremendous job of restoring mined lands and watersheds over the last thirty years. Many of their projects have direct benefits to fish populations downstream. Brook trout historically inhabited most of the headwaters streams in Pennsylvania and western Maryland. The resurrection of this key species is important both as an indicator of water quality and to recreational anglers,” he added.

“The Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture is excited by the local partnerships that have been established to restore brook trout habitat in Aaron Run and Williams Run, two streams that have been severely impacted by acid mine drainage (AMD),” said Stephen Perry, EBTJV Chairman and Chief of the Inland Fisheries Division of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department. “AMD has been identified as a major but reversible impact to brook trout habitat in the Mid-Atlantic States. We are pleased to be working with OSM and other partners to restore AMD damaged streams so that they once again support viable populations of brook trout. These two projects highlight the power of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, as we move towards making our waterways healthy for fish,” he added.

Profiles of the Aaron Run and Williams Run projects may be found at the National Fish Habitat Action Plan’s website, [www.fishhabitat.org](http://www.fishhabitat.org).

OSM carries out the requirements of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act in cooperation with States and Indian Tribes. OSM's primary objectives are to ensure that coal mining activities are conducted in a manner that protects citizens and the environment during mining, to ensure that the land is restored to beneficial use following mining, and to mitigate the effects of past mining by aggressively pursuing reclamation of abandoned coal mines.