



**News Release
November 3, 2001
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Watershed Celebration Day Winners Announced

Volunteers committed to watershed protection were honored Saturday at the third annual Watershed Celebration Day. Award winners were from all parts of West Virginia and were commended for their work in stream protection, restoration, and environmental education.

Sponsored by the West Virginia Watershed Network, the day-long event featured award presentations, networking opportunities, and water-related activities for adults and children. Over 200 watershed association members and state and federal agency representatives attended the event at Stonewall Jackson Lake State Park near Weston, W.Va.

The highlight of the celebration was the awards presentations. The following are the award winners for 2001:

And the winner is....

Shavers Fork Coalition (Randolph County) earned the Watershed of the Year award. Among other watershed improvement projects, the group initiated a 'Healing the Headwaters' group, which includes 18 other organizations in the interest of watershed protection in West Virginia. The watershed association received a plaque and highway signs identifying their watershed as the winner for 2001. The group later accepted the Forestry Award as well.

The Watershed Person of the Year (Guiding Light Award) was presented to Marty Prichard of the Lower Paint Creek Association (Kanawha County). Prichard was chosen as the person who has promoted the grassroots approach to problem solving outside of her own watershed. Prichard helped establish other watershed associations outside of her upper Kanawha Valley community, as well as provided educational services to other groups interested in water quality improvement activities.

The Dunkard Creek Watershed Association (Monongalia County) received the Water Quality Award for their efforts to conduct water quality surveys. The group assessed the Dunkard Creek ecosystem to determine problems within the watershed. A state-of-the-art computer system was acquired, installed and used to archive historical, present, and future data on water quality and other information.

The Outreach and Education Award went to the Friends of Spring Run's Wild Trout (Grant County). The group has worked to educate those living in eastern West Virginia about watershed management and the benefits of environmental stewardship. Among other projects, the

group holds an annual Field Conservation Day for area high school students, emphasizing stream stewardship, wild trout conservation, fly fishing and catch and release practices.

The Webster County Watershed Association took home the Recreation Award. The group has successfully promoted streams in their area for recreation both for residents and visitors through river access sites and information boards. A recent fundraiser brought in \$10,000 and increased awareness of the importance of watershed protection.

Heizer Manila Watershed Organization (Putnam County) was presented with the Stream Partners Award for their efforts in establishing partnerships with state and federal agencies and recreationalists, sharing a common goal to improve local water quality. Over the past year the group has worked with local, state and federal agencies to work on contamination, flooding and trash issues.

The Agriculture Award was presented to the Cacapon Institute (Hampshire County). The group initiated a program called the Headwater Farms Petite Beef Project. The project promotes farming without the use of growth hormones. Through the same project, farmers enter into an agreement to adopt management practices to protect water quality and improve land management.

The Friends of the Cheat (Randolph and Preston counties) received the Polluted Coal Mine Drainage Award. The group has researched, monitored, and demonstrated long-term solutions for mine drainage problems within the Cheat River watershed.

Earning the Habitat Award, the Lower Paint Creek Watershed Association (Kanawha County) was recognized for their efforts to restore stream habitat. A boulder placement project was completed, creating a habitat for a viable trout population in the stream.

The Urban Work Award was presented to the Friends of the Cacapon River (Morgan County). The group is addressing urban sprawl issues in the growing eastern panhandle of West Virginia. The group researched, created and published a packet for homeowners which discusses floodplain issues, riverbank stabilization, plant protection and sanitary considerations.

The Little Sandy Creek Watershed Association (Kanawha County) earned the title of New Watershed of the Year, forging partnerships and bringing together the town of Elkview for the good of the watershed. In their first year of existence, the group received a Stream Partners grant and organized a cleanup in conjunction with the Kanawha County Commission.

Heizer Manila Creek Watershed Organization won their second award of the day, accepting the Flood Mitigation Award. The group has worked on Heizer and Manila creeks to bring awareness on flooding issues, flood protection, stream bank stabilization and water quality by sponsoring a Flood Strategies Roundtable.

And, finally, the Solid Waste Award was presented to the Big Coal River Watershed Association (Boone County). The association removed over 700 tons of trash and 300 tires during cleanups in their area.

The awards are sponsored by the West Virginia Watershed Network, a group of state and federal agencies and nonprofit groups committed to providing resources for watershed management in West Virginia.

Watershed Celebration Day was made possible through the work of network members and funding made available by Dominion Power, American Electric Power, the U.S. Office of Surface Mining, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Division of Natural Resources, Canaan Valley Institute, the National Park Service and the Southern, West Fork, Capitol, Little Kanawha, Elk, Monongahela, Greenbrier Valley, Potomac Valley, Western and Eastern Panhandle Soil Conservation Districts.

For more information on the West Virginia Watershed Network or Watershed Celebration Day, call (304) 558-2108 or email jwelsh@mail.dep.state.wv.us.

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West Virginia Watershed Network

West Virginia Division of Environmental Protection, Division of Forestry, Division of Natural Resources, Soil Conservation Agency, U.S. Office of Surface Mining, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service, National Park Service, U.S. Department of Energy National Energy Technology Laboratory, Canaan Valley Institute, River Network, Rivers Coalition