

Watershed Operations

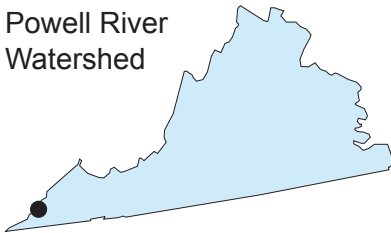
April 2009

Investing in the North Fork of the Powell River Watershed, Virginia

Introduction

This project will improve water quality by reducing pollution entering streams from abandoned mine lands. This project will create or save jobs in Lee County and add approximately \$55,000 in average annual benefits.

Powell River Watershed



This project is located in Lee County, Virginia.

Funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, this project is part of the Obama Administration's plans to modernize the nation's infrastructure, jump-start the economy, and create jobs. NRCS is using Recovery Act dollars to update aging flood control structures, protect and maintain water supplies, improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and restore wetlands. NRCS acquires easements and restores floodplains to safeguard lives and property in areas along streams and rivers that have experienced flooding.

Project Description

- **Location:** Lee County, 9th Congressional District
- **Federal Funding:** \$380,000
- **Sponsor Funding:** \$29,923

The project will install conservation practices on acid mine drainage and critically eroding land sites. The plan will improve water quality downstream that effect residents and wildlife and aquatic habitats.

Partners

- USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Lee County Board of Supervisors, Virginia
- Daniel Boone Soil and Water Conservation District
- Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy

Benefits

The project will improve water quality for downstream residents and also improve aquatic habitat for 22.95 miles of fisheries and 15 threatened and/or endangered species of freshwater mussels and fish. It will create wetlands and improve wildlife habitat on approximately 64 acres. Overall, the project will improve water quality, create recreational opportunities, and improve economic opportunities for the region.



Twenty nine species of mussels and 19 species of rare fish are found in the North Fork Powell River drainage.

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Economic Opportunities

The North Fork of the Powell River watershed project will create or save jobs in Lee County. The project will also generate revenue for small, privately owned local businesses through increased sales of construction supplies, equipment parts and services. The estimated total economic value is \$565,000.

Statewide Perspective

The watershed is located in the northeastern part of the county where coal mining was the principal industry for nearly a century.

Since most of the mines were worked before the federal mine land reclamation laws, they were simply abandoned. As a result, many of the tributary streams to the North Fork Powell River watershed have poor water quality due to contaminated soils eroding from the mine banks. Metals attached to these sediments, when dissolved in water at critical concentrations, can impact the health of the residents and become toxic to fish, invertebrates, and plant life.

For More Information

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Project will reduce 252 tons of sediment delivered to streams annually.



Measures will be installed to treat acid mine drainage.



Residents will not have to travel long distances for clean water.

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