

Watershed Operations

April, 2009

Deckers Creek Acid Mine Drainage, West Virginia

Introduction

Large-scale coal mining started in the Deckers Creek watershed at the turn of the twentieth century creating conditions contributing to acid mine drainage and degraded the water quality of the creek.



The Deckers Creek Acid Mine Drainage Remediation Project is located in Preston and Monongalia Counties, West 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:** Preston and Monongalia Counties, West Virginia 1st Congressional District
- **Federal Funding:** \$4,885,000

The Deckers Creek Acid Mine Drainage Remediation Project will treat acid mine drainage from four mining sites. The project will install a series of structures such as open limestone channels, limestone ponds, and settlement ponds as well as erosion and sediment control practices.

Partners

- USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Monongahela Conservation District
- West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Abandoned Mine Lands and Reclamation
- West Virginia Conservation Agency

Benefits

Most of the abandoned deep mines along Deckers Creek produce acid drainage that seeps into the abandoned mine workings until the mine pool rises above the level of the creek. Some of the most severely impacted reaches of stream flow through the city of Morgantown. Improving the water quality will increase the recreational revenue for the communities along its reaches and reduce public health problems related to people coming in contact with the water.



Deckers Creek has milky to reddish tones.

Deckers Creek, Acid Mine Drainage, West Virginia

Economic Opportunities

An average annual benefit of \$927,000 will come from recreational activities which include fishing and other water sports, Scenic Byway enhancement, and rail trail enhancement. Approximately 48,000 residents of Monongalia and Preston Counties will benefit directly or indirectly. This project will create or save jobs in the area.

Statewide Perspective

Acid Mine Drainage is a significant resource concern in West Virginia. Improving the water quality in Deckers Creek is a high priority.

For More Information

USDA, NRCS
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www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov



Some of the worst stained reaches of stream are through the city of Morgantown in highly visible areas.



Red iron oxide stains the rocks where it first hits the creek. Just outside the red zone, there is an intense white rind of aluminum oxide in this snowy winter scene.

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