

## **West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Coalition Memorandum of Understanding**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) constitutes an agreement among the entities comprising the West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Coalition (WBSRC) listed below for the following reasons:

- To formalize the West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Coalition as a coordinating body with a purpose, scope, and set of strategies common to its members aimed at addressing water resources impacted by abandoned mine drainage (AMD) and abandoned mine lands (AML) within the greater West Branch Susquehanna River watershed.
- To declare officially that the signatories are actively cooperating in ongoing efforts (1) to raise public awareness of the scope and extent of the AMD-impaired waters in the West Branch watershed and (2) to promote all reasonable and scientifically tested efforts to return these waters to historic levels characterized as high-quality fisheries.
- To provide documentation of the mission, vision, and goals of the WBSRC for all to see.
- To clarify and emphasize that each of the signatories is autonomous and operates according to its own respective rules and procedures and with this MOU each agrees to work toward the WBSRC's common goals.

### **ARTICLE I. HISTORY OF THE WEST BRANCH SUSQUEHANNA RESTORATION INITIATIVE**

Abandoned mine drainage (AMD) is the single largest source of pollution to waterways within the West Branch Susquehanna watershed. More than 1,100 miles of streams are impacted by AMD and over 36,800 acres of land are affected. As a result of the extensive impact that AMD pollution has had throughout the West Branch watershed, countless federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, watershed groups, and individuals have gotten on board and accepted the responsibility of addressing this problem. Moreover, there is growing recognition of the direct economic benefits to the region from tourism and recreation giving even greater impetus to restoration projects.

With the recent designation of the Commonwealth's northcentral region as the 'Pennsylvania Wilds,' the watershed has received more of the spotlight. Governor Rendell stated that "cleaning up acid mine drainage is a priority in the battle to preserve and enhance the 12-county north central region of the state known as the Pennsylvania Wilds." Currently, the Commonwealth is developing strategies to encourage the growth of tourism and related-businesses based on the area's significant "outdoor" resources, and fundamental to this initiative are clean and biologically productive waterways.

As part of a grassroots effort, more than a dozen watershed associations have come together with the support and guidance of Trout Unlimited to form the West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Coalition. The WBSRC was a key outcome of discussions held at the first-ever West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Symposium on May 6-7, 2005 in State College. In addition to watershed constituents, representatives from conservation districts, educational institutions, and individuals from both the private and public sectors, all of whom have an interest in watershed

restoration, meet to exchange information, formulate educational initiatives, and build widespread public support for the efforts aimed at the cleanup of abandoned mine drainage throughout the West Branch.

## **ARTICLE II. WBSRC VISION**

The vision of the WBSRC is to see water quality restored to pre-mining conditions throughout this beautiful and scenic West Branch Susquehanna River watershed and to encourage its protection and preservation so that future generations will value this immense natural resource and enjoy all that it has to offer.

## **ARTICLE III. WBSRC MISSION**

The mission of the WBSRC is to promote public awareness and stimulate efforts to restore water resources impacted by abandoned mine lands (AML) and abandoned mine drainage (AMD) within the West Branch Susquehanna River basin, ultimately improving the quality of life for those living in and visiting the watershed.

## **ARTICLE IV. GOALS**

Toward this end, the signatories to this MOU will work cooperatively and diligently to facilitate public awareness, communication, and educational opportunities in order to achieve the following goals:

- Build local grassroots and public support through positive educational efforts.
- Provide a forum for the communication and exchange of information on restoration activities within the watershed.
- Promote public awareness of the economic benefits of restoration efforts.

## **ARTICLE V. THE ROLE OF THE SIGNATORIES**

Responsibilities and activities undertaken by each signatory to this MOU in order to accomplish common goals will include but not be limited to the following:

- Promote and participate in planning processes necessary to develop a basin-wide strategic remediation plan for restoring water resources impacted by AML and AMD.
- Foster cooperation and partnerships among members of the WBSRC in order to achieve common and individual watershed goals.
- Provide letters of support and oral testimony for projects that address remediation in the watershed.
- Meet periodically to coordinate and integrate the work of each member's group into unified and meaningful strategies that advance the goals of the WBSRC.
- Support ongoing public-awareness and environmental-education components for basin-wide and individual watershed objectives, particularly those focused on improvement of water resources impacted by AMD and AML.

- Join with agencies focusing on local and regional tourism and economic development to promote and market the recreational, scenic, and cultural resources as well as business opportunities within the watershed.

**ARTICLE VI. THE ROLE OF WBSRC**

Responsibilities and activities undertaken by the WBSRC in order to accomplish common goals will include but not be limited to the following:

- The WBSRC will serve as the coordinating body in guiding the planning and implementation of regional and basin-wide projects focused on the restoration of high-quality water resources impacted by AMD and AML.
- Facilitate the exchange of information, data, technology, and methodology among groups to address and solve common remediation problems.
- Develop strategies for funding consistent with goals of the WBSRC and priorities reached collectively by each watershed group.
- Coordinate educational and public awareness activities for basin-wide projects as necessary.
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**ARTICLE VII. TERMS OF THE MOU**

The West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Coalition is an organization comprising autonomous entities with common goals and who agree to work together for the benefit of all. The memorandum will become effective when signed by two or more organizations. Any signatory may terminate its participation by written notification to the WBSRC.

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*Organization*

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*Signature of authorized organizational signatory* *Date*

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*Printed name of authorized organizational signatory* *Title*

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*Contact Information (optional)*