



West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Coalition

Summer 2009



The West Branch Susquehanna and the Chesapeake Bay

It's easy for residents who live in the West Branch Susquehanna watershed, far upstream of the Chesapeake Bay's Blue Crab populations and tidal areas to disassociate themselves with the Bay's struggle for ecological balance. Put simply, Blue Crabs, albeit important, aren't the topic of the majority of environmental-related conversations in the West Branch. Instead, here in the heart of Pennsylvania's bituminous coal seam, discussions often revolve around abandoned mine drainage.

The West Branch of the Susquehanna watershed

located in north-central Pennsylvania has more than 42,000 acres of barren landscape from abandoned coal mines and more than 1,200 miles of polluted streams and rivers as a result of water draining from these lands. What's more is that it has been determined that between \$110 million to



Streams like Cooks Run in Clinton County have a negative impact on the Chesapeake Bay

\$453 million in capital expenditures will be required to fix these problems. Given these daunting numbers it's not surprising that dead streams and tree-devoid landscapes sometimes takes precedence over the struggles of the Bay in the West Branch Susquehanna.

Fixing abandoned mine drainage pollution related problems in the West Branch Susquehanna watershed will cause obvious improvements ecologically – and a recent study has shown that these ecological improvements will also translate to economical

improvements. For instance, the watershed could generate \$22.3 million in fishing revenues every year if its streams were free of pollution and remediation efforts could generate up to 4,000 green-collar jobs.

But what does abandoned mine drainage reclamation in the West Branch Susquehanna watershed mean for the Chesapeake Bay? Polluted streams are likely to be a direct conduit for nutrient, namely nitrogen and phosphorus, transportation downstream. Healthy streams and their adjacent floodplains are able

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AMD Education Tours Coming to your Watershed!

One of the highlights of the recently published Economic Benefits Analysis is that 50% of willingness-to-pay for remediation mail survey respondents living in the West Branch Susquehanna watershed were not aware of the severity of AMD-pollution in the watershed.

This disheartening statistic demonstrates a need for more diversified and far-reaching education programs throughout the watershed. So – that's exactly what we are doing.

Instead of hosting the annual West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Symposium this year, Trout Unlimited and the WBSRC will be hosting a series of six abandoned mine drainage education sessions and bus tours.

2009 West Branch Susquehanna AMD Education Tours

July 12th—Beech Creek Watershed

July 16th—West Branch Headwaters

August 15th—Anderson Creek Watershed

August 21st—Moshannon Creek Watershed

September 12th—Babb Creek Watershed

September 19th—Clearfield Creek Watershed

Each of these programs will feature a WBSRC-partner group and will highlight the important work being done to reclaim our polluted waterways.

Check the WBSRC website frequently for updates about these six programs.

If you would like to attend one of these programs or volunteer contact 570-748-4901.

New Summer Brings New Faces to the WBSRC and TU

Three new interns have joined ranks with the WBSRC and TU for the summer. Lori Smith and Zack Bassett, both pursuing a B.S. degree in Biology,

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Interns Aaron Fargiuele, Lori Smith, and Zack Bassett examine insects collected as part of the West Branch Recovery Benchmark project

