



PROTECT CONSERVE ENHANCE

Grants Will Help Restore Sinnemahoning Watershed



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When an environmental disaster strikes, no amount of restitution can compensate for the damage inflicted on the resources—dead fish, destroyed habitats, polluted waterways. The best we can do is clean up, rebuild habitats and try to restore life to the affected watershed. That's what 24 projects aim to do starting next year in northcentral Pennsylvania after having received grant money from the PA Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC).

In August, the Commission announced more than \$1.36 million in grants to develop and implement projects that benefit fishing, boating, and aquatic resources within the Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed in Cameron, Elk, Potter and McKean counties. The funding is available through a 2007 settlement agreement with Norfolk Southern as restitution for environmental damages from a June 30, 2006 train derailment in rural Norwich Township, McKean County. The accident spilled 42,000 gallons of 50% sodium hydroxide into the environment which caused damage to the natural resources of Big Fill Run, Sinnemahoning-Portage Creek and the Driftwood Branch of Sinnemahoning Creek.

Under the settlement, Norfolk Southern paid the Commonwealth \$7.35 million as restitution for environmental damages. The PFBC received \$3.675 million for projects.

The projects funded total \$1,362,988 and include:

American Rivers, Inc., \$55,000 - Provide fish passage and restore stream habitat through the removal of a low-head dam in Bendigo State Park.

Bucktail Watershed Association, \$4,750 - Improve riparian habitat along Driftwood Branch, Cameron County.

Cameron County Conservation District, \$25,000 and \$240,000 - Stabilize stream banks and enhance stream habitat in the Sinnemahoning-Portage Creek watershed and construct passive system to treat mine discharge in May Hollow and Sterling Run watersheds.

Elk Conservation District & Elk County Freshwater Association, \$65,000 - Construct public access facilities and stream bank stabilization measures in Big Mill Creek, Elk County.

McKean County Conservation District, \$315,400 - Provide project management support and complete 24 stabilization and habitat improvement projects on various waters.

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, \$17,590 - Provide technical assistance to control invasive plants along the First Fork corridor in Cameron and Potter counties.

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, \$132,600 - Two projects to improve riparian habitat along First Fork of Sinnemahoning Creek in Sinnemahoning Creek State Park and to develop educational materials for students and teachers.

Trout Unlimited, \$15,400 - Expand Trout in the Classroom program for schools in Elk, Cameron, McKean and Potter counties.

Pennsylvania Game Commission, \$21,100 - Provide public access and improve fish habitat in Meade Run Ponds, Allegheny National Forest.

Pennsylvania State University and US Fish and Wildlife Service, \$145,353 - Two projects to conduct long-term monitoring of brook and brown trout populations and their habitat in north central Pennsylvania

Potter County Conservation District, \$152,600 - Stabilize stream banks and enhance stream habitat at various sites.

Toby Creek Watershed Association, \$58,500 - Provide chemicals for the continued operation of the Blue Valley Treatment System Facility, Brandy Camp Creek, Elk County.

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, \$114,695 - Complete an assessment and restoration plan for the Sinnemahoning-Portage Creek and Driftwood Branch.