

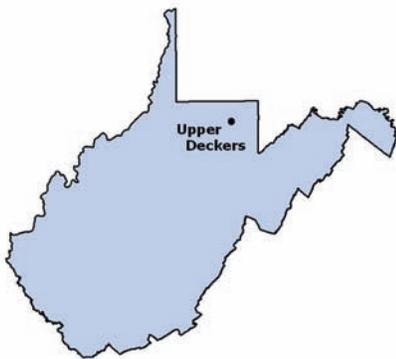
Watershed Operations

April, 2009

Deckers Creek, West Virginia Acid Mine Drainage

Introduction

Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) into Deckers Creek has degraded the water quality of the stream by lowering its pH and introducing high concentrations of iron and aluminum.



The Deckers Creek Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) Remediation Project is located in Preston and Monongalia Counties, WV.

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, First Congressional District
- Federal Funding: \$4,885,000
- Sponsor Funding: \$0
- **Size:** 40,251 acres (watershed)
- **Start Date:** Obligate Phase 1 construction funds: July 2009; Obligate Phase 2 construction funds: November 2009

The Deckers Creek Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) Remediation Project will treat acid mine drainage from four mining sites which will include installation of passive treatment measures such as open limestone channels, limestone ponds, and settlement ponds. Erosion and sediment control measures will be applied to all four sites.

Partners

- Monongahela Conservation District
- West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection – Office of Abandoned Mine Lands and Reclamation
- West Virginia Conservation Agency

Benefits

Because of the acidic nature of the Upper Freeport coal seam that runs through the area, most of the abandoned deep mines along Deckers Creek produce acid drainage. Water seeps into the abandoned mine workings until the mine pool rises above the level of the creek. Much coal was mined in the watershed and their associated workings abandoned long before the passage of the Clean Water Act and Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act. Water

Deckers Creek has usual milky to reddish tones familiar to rail trail users.



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

from most of these deep mines flows into Deckers Creek untreated.

Red iron oxide stains the rocks where it first enters the creek. Just outside the red zone, there is an intense white rind of aluminum oxide. There is a visible orange plume where it enters the Monongahela River. Some of the worst stained reaches of stream are through the city of Morgantown in highly visible areas. There are 16 miles of rail trail along the creek that is designated as a National Recreational Trail.

The original watershed plan was authorized in 1963 under the authority of Public Law 83-566. This project is the result of a Supplemental Watershed Plan which addressed the acid mine drainage degradation issues in the watershed.

Acid mine drainage is toxic to most wildlife. When the acid mine drainage is cleaned up, the creek will again be able to support aquatic life. Deckers Creek has the potential to be a first rate fishery.

Improving the water quality in Deckers Creek would increase

the recreational revenue for the communities along its reaches and reduce public health problems related to people contacting the water.

Economic Opportunities

- Estimated average annual recreational benefits from fishing and other water sports: \$281,000
- Estimated average annual recreation benefits from Scenic Byway enhancement: \$606,000
- Estimated average annual recreation benefits from Rail Trail enhancement: \$85,000
- Estimated residents of Monongalia and Preston Counties directly or indirectly benefited: 48,000

This project will create an estimated 20 jobs.

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 NRCS and local sponsors.

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.



For More Information

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Project web site:
[http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/
programs/watershed/deckersckAMD/
deckersckAMD.html](http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/watershed/deckersckAMD/deckersckAMD.html)

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