

Watershed Operations

August 2013

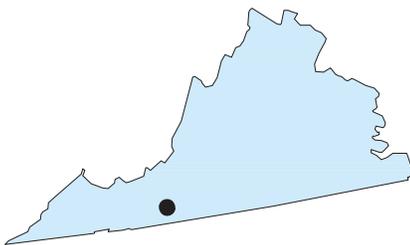
The Case for Reinvesting in Chestnut Creek Watershed

Introduction

This watershed project helped improve water quality for drinking and recreation, increase farm income, protect aquatic habitat, and lower costs for water treatment. The project also contributed to the economic growth of the area by providing expanded opportunities for trout fishing.

Funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the project is part of the Obama Administration's plans to modernize the nation's infrastructure, jumpstart the economy, and create jobs.

In Virginia, NRCS used 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.



Chestnut Creek Watershed

This project helped with planning and financial assistance to create rotational grazing systems. The benefits include better forages, decrease in noxious weeds and less soil erosion while protecting water quality.

Project Description

- **Location:** Carroll and Grayson Counties, the Town of Fries, and the City of Galax, Virginia, 9th Congressional District
- **Size:** Covers 91,594 acres
- **Start Date:** April 2009

A watershed assessment conducted by the state calls for treating 12,883 acres of pastureland, hayland, woodland, cropland, and riparian corridors to improve water quality, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and protect the soil from further degradation. ARRA funds contributed \$162,376 for four contracts to install conservation practices on 400 acres of grazing land to help accomplish this goal.

Partners

- Carroll County Board of Supervisors, Virginia
- Grayson County Board of Supervisors, Virginia
- Town of Fries, Virginia
- City of Galax
- New River Soil and Water Conservation District

Benefits

Once the entire watershed plan is complete, benefits will include reducing water treatment costs by nearly \$7,000 per year, restoring 28.6 miles of trout fishery and reducing damages to agricultural land and streams caused by excessive erosion and sedimentation.



A watering trough provides clean water for cattle and keeps livestock out of streams.

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Economic Opportunities

ARRA funds for the Chestnut Creek watershed project helped generate revenue in Carroll and Grayson Counties for small, privately owned local businesses through increased sales of fencing and other farm supplies, equipment parts, and services.

Installing conservation practices on agricultural land helped improve forage production and animal health, and boosted farm income.

Installed practices also helped reduce erosion, and sediment and nutrient runoff to streams and rivers. As a result of improved water quality, opportunities for recreational activities like trout fishing increased, bringing more income into the community for vendors and service providers.

Grazing management practices are helping improve water quality in Chestnut Creek.



Statewide Perspective

Chestnut Creek watershed flows through forests, tree farms, cropland and livestock pastures in Grayson County before entering Carroll County at Galax. The stream supplies drinking water for roughly 2,700 residents in the City of Galax and outlying communities of Fairview and Cranberry.

This watershed ranks in the top ten percent of the state's priority watersheds due to erosion on agricultural land. Poor pasture management and livestock access to streams contribute sediment, nutrients and bacteria to the waterways.

ARRA provided \$162,376 for four contracts to install conservation practices on nearly 400 acres of grazing land. Obligations for construction work totalling \$249,809 (including landowner contributions) will be completed by September 2013.

ARRA funded: three spring developments, one well, one pumping plant, fifteen watering facilities, 13,715 square feet of animal trails and walkways, 8 acres of critical area planting, 206 acres of pasture and hayland planting, 21,519 feet of fencing, 4.7 acres of tree planting, and three stream crossings.



Restricting livestock access reduced streambank erosion and sediment.



Cleaner streams mean improved trout habitat.

For More Information

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