



United States Department of Agriculture

JOINT CHIEFS' LANDSCAPE RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP

The Power of Partnership

RESTORATION VENTURE



Monongahela National Forest © Kent Mason

West Virginia sits in the middle of the Appalachian Mountains. Known for blue peaks shrouded in fog and a rich cultural heritage, the region has another bragging point - it is home to an incredibly diverse array of plants and animals, making it a biodiversity hotspot of continental importance. The deep red spruce, oak-hickory forests and energy-producing resources found underground are both a blessing and a curse. At the turn of the 20th century, timber to build our growing country was harvested at a breakneck pace. The speed and scope of that clearing, combined with subsequent coal extraction, community development and industrial growth, led to extreme and long-lasting impacts on the landscape. Yet, the people of this area are determined to learn from the past and leverage their spirit towards what this landscape is becoming—a network of public and private lands that will provide natural resources, community benefits and critical habitat for iconic and economically important species in a time of extreme weather inconsistencies. A strong group of partners worked together more than a decade ago to prioritize work in the Monongahela National Forest and on other public lands and private property. This Joint Chief's Landscape Restoration Partnership (JCLRP) project used that priority to fund a trajectory that will continue to enhance water quality and quantity, weather resilience, recreational opportunities and quality of life.

PROJECT IMPACT

\$2.2 million
IN MATCHING FUNDS

Funding was leveraged to secure an additional \$2.2 million in impact through partner support, matching grants and other funds. Sixty-eight local jobs were also created.

Total awarded through the JCLRP from 2014-2016: \$9.8 million

USDA's Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service are working together to improve the health of forests where public forests and grasslands connect to privately owned lands. Through the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership, the two USDA agencies are restoring landscapes by reducing wildfire threats to communities and landowners, protecting water quality and enhancing wildlife habitat.

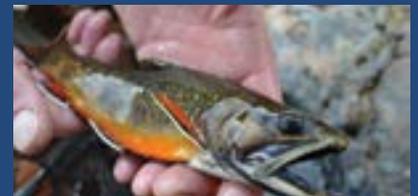
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WEST VIRGINIA

Restoration Venture Project

GOALS



Brook trout © Trout Unlimited



Reduce wildfire risk:

Controlled burns were applied to 962 acres of oak-hickory forests to improve forest health, reduce wildfire risk and restore wildlife habitat by removing hazardous fuels and reversing the loss of oaks, due to decades of fire suppression.



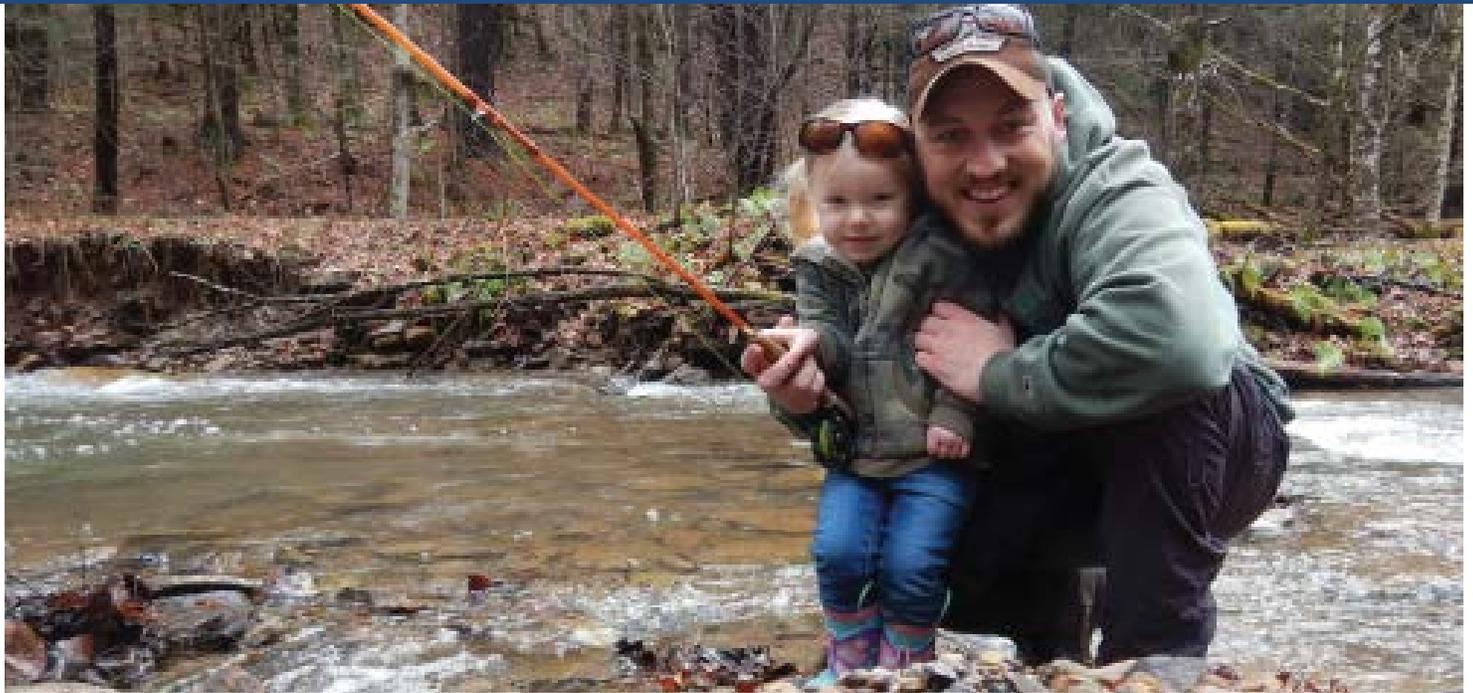
Improve water quality:

Fencing, logs and native plantings improved water quality and brook trout habitat by reducing erosion and establishing cover along 56 miles of streams. Barriers to fish passage were removed, connecting 49 miles of habitat. Forty-one miles of unnecessary roads were also rendered, restoring natural hydrologic processes.



Enhance wildlife habitat:

Restored 1,800 acres of red spruce within its former range by planting 80,000 seedlings, reviving reclaimed mined lands and releasing understory spruce in hardwood-dominated stands. This enhanced wildlife habitat for species, including the threatened Cheat Mountain salamander and the West Virginia northern flying squirrel and snowshoe hare.



Dustin Wichterman and his daughter. © Trout Unlimited

Brook trout don't know what state they are swimming in. Nor are they aware of whether their favorite spot on a cool day is on private or public land.

But lucky for the trout, Dustin Wichterman knows. As Potomac Headwaters program manager with the national conservation and advocacy organization, Trout Unlimited, Dustin works to improve habitat for the prized game fish. "The Forest Service manages their land well, but as mountain streams reach timber and agricultural land on the valley floor, there is a need for improved management," Wichterman said.

Funding from the Joint Chiefs' project is enabling partners like Trout Unlimited to bring improved management practices to public lands and private landowners, supporting local economic growth and the protection of wildlife habitat. "We work with landowners and farmers to meet their needs while improving the outlook for brook trout," Wichterman said. "This funding was the link we had been waiting on for a long time."

By placing woody material into streams to restore 30 miles of aquatic habitat and planting thousands of red spruce to control erosion, efforts are paying off quickly. "This is some of the most satisfying work you can do as an ecologist," said Kent Karriker with the U.S. Forest Service. "You can go to a site a year later, and brook trout are spawning. It's as close to instant results as you ever get in this line of work."

Wichterman says the goal is to reconnect waterways so fish can move to larger rivers and grow bigger. "I hope that one day my little girl can catch two-foot-long brook trout in this state. I take pride in knowing my work benefits not just trout, but American eel, darters and the native fish—species that are indicators of a healthy system."



Crews place woody material in a stream
© Trout Unlimited

Key Partners

The American Chestnut Foundation
American Forest Foundation
Canaan Valley Institute
Green Forests Work
Ruffed Grouse Society
The Nature Conservancy
Trout Unlimited
West Virginia Division of Natural Resources
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
West Virginia University