



West Virginia: Restoration Venture

The Partners

For many years the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Monongahela National Forest (MNF) have collaborated across political boundaries to address natural resources issues. Other partners include Trout Unlimited (TU), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and Canaan Valley Institute (CVI).



The Project



The Forest Service and NRCS have been working jointly on collecting scientific data and developing assessment tools for decades in West Virginia. This strong relationship and ability to share resources will be a springboard to implement high priority restoration in the Greenbrier, Cheat, and Potomac (and adjacent) watersheds. Traditionally, NRCS has implemented programs that are focused at the farm scale working one-on-one with landowners to promote conservation and implement Farm Bill initiatives. The Forest Service has worked within individual watersheds to implement conservation practices on public land. By working together, NRCS

and FS will be able to strategically identify projects and landowners in three selected watersheds that will result in measurable improvements in local water quality and wildlife habitat across a much broader landscape. Such projects would use joint science products, incorporate NRCS program criteria, and engage a wide range of partners who can help align and multiply agency resources.

The project will accelerate ecosystem improvement through strengthened interagency planning and project implementation. NRCS and MNF are working with TU, TNC, CVI and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to expand their respective programs and projects to improve habitat connectivity, ecosystem restoration, improved soil health, climate change adaptation, carbon sequestration, improve water quality, increased threatened and endangered and at-risk species habitat, wetland restoration, aquatic habitat and watershed restoration, improved soil





data and interpretations, ecological site descriptions, reduced sedimentation, and restoration of historic fire regimes through the use of prescribed fire.

The Benefits of Additional Resources

Additional resources will enable the partnership to implement coordinated conservation activities that 1) maximize capacity to improve habitat for wildlife, especially high priority species; 2) reduce sources of water pollution on private and public lands to improve water quality; 3) decommission roads and improve soil health; and 4) improve riparian and aquatic habitats with the addition of large woody material and by addressing aquatic organism passage barriers. Other outcomes are to restore natural fire regimes and reduce fuel loading that could result in wildfires and threaten communities. Engaging community-based groups, universities, private landowners, and other



interested stakeholders to align priorities and implement on-the-ground restoration and management is the ultimate measure of success. This success will lead to long-term sustainability which is vital to the communities located in the project area many of which are classified as economically distressed.

The Measure of Success

Success is the joint implementation of projects using technical and financial resources from the public and private partners which achieve positive outcomes of this initiative. Success can be measured by improved wildlife habitat, increased habitat connectivity, improved water quality, improved soil health, and decreased risk of wildlife species losses.

