



OSM/VISTA Greenbrier/Little Clear Creek, WV

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The purpose of the Greenbrier River Watershed Association (GRWA) is to promote the maintenance, preservation, protection, and restoration of the ecological integrity of the Greenbrier River and its watershed.

The GRWA received an OSM/VISTA from the Office of Surface Mining to work as part of the Coal Country Watershed Team on the Little Clear Creek Project. Little Clear Creek, a tributary of the Meadow River, is located in Western Greenbrier County. While the Greenbrier River Watershed has not experienced as significant mining impacts as our neighbors, people on Little Clear Creek face a variety of mining related issues. The goal of this project is to assess the interest in watershed protection in the Little Clear Creek area and to help local citizens create their own watershed organization and restoration plan.



Work on this project included several trips to the area. Tours of mine sites and abandoned mine lands were conducted throughout the year, including a discussion of keys to identifying abandoned mine lands provided by Mr. Mel Hartley of the WV DEP and an aerial flight of mine impacted areas. GRWA has worked with concerned citizens in the western end of Greenbrier County and other organizations interested in protecting the health of these vibrant waters that are important to trout enthusiasts.

The Little Clear Creek Project was furthered by attending all the Greenbrier county Land Use Planning committee meetings. The steering committee member rated all mining sites in the county for potential future use and formulated a master land use plan, in accordance with a new bill through the Rahall Transportation Institute. The bill seeks local input on future use of mined lands, as well as forging partnerships with development and mining to offset the costs of reclamation. (A site intended for a parking lot does not require reclamation to pristine wilderness that will be demolished for the project- common sense strategy really) The meetings were a great way to experience the local steering committee process and provided contacts in the Little Clear Creek area as well as lots of great data compiled in one place, which up to that point had been spread among various agencies and departments. The GIS maps of mine sites are impressive data useful to our endeavors.

GRWA has a Baseline Study of our river and a Water Quality Manual available for our members and others interested in monitoring the river's health. We have mounted various public awareness campaigns, hold an annual river cleanup, co-sponsor a river race held each year, and have developed and implemented a watershed education program for public schools.

The OSM/ VISTA has participated in all of these endeavors and the following tasks in accordance with her work-plan submitted to OSM and VISTA. Other responsibilities of the OSM/VISTA include the creation and publication of the quarterly newsletter, coordination of special events, planning of meetings, publicity of upcoming events, all manner of public relations with local media and partnering agencies, writing and submission of grant proposals, attendance at several conferences and OSM/ VISTA gatherings, and hands-on work with volunteers.

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