



## Pennsylvania Initiatives of the Mid-Atlantic Highlands Action Program

### **Audenreid Mine Tunnel AMD Treatment Project** – Cong. District 17

HAP assisted this project in Schuylkill County at a critical juncture to secure funds to complete the \$2.5 million project. Funding helped restore the 152-square-mile Catawissa Creek watershed to its former high ecological quality, and reconnected together several patches of high value forest and a dozen tributaries that have reproducing brook trout.

#### HAP Efforts (completed):

- Obtained \$38,000 grant from the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture to purchase high-calcium limestone for three treatment tanks to finish the project.
- Added value to a project that had a previous investment of \$2.3 million federal and \$143 non-federal funds. The (comparatively) small, targeted investment by HAP resulted in completed project with impressive results.
- Helped return 36 miles of the “dead” Catawissa Creek to an ecologically-functioning state for the first time in 80 years, helping to reduce nutrient flow to the Chesapeake Bay.



**Partners:** EPA 319 program, PA DEP Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation, U.S. Office of Surface Mining, Catawissa Creek Watershed Association, Western PA Watershed Coalition, Schuylkill County Watershed Grant Program, Schuylkill County and Catawissa County conservation districts, and Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture.

### **Clearfield High School AMD Education & Action Program** – Cong. District 5

PA HAP supported a program with the Clearfield County Conservation District to secure a model youth Abandoned Mine Drainage education and action program for high school youth. Clearfield County is Pennsylvania’s leading county for impacts due to abandoned mine lands and acid mine drainage, and residents are seeing fish return for the first time in generations.

**HAP Efforts:** Provided start-up funding for equipment and buses, meetings with school administrators, wrote story of project in PA Borough News to give statewide publicity, and helped institutionalize the program in the school system. Teens continue to investigate and help improve local streams impacted by acid mine drainage, but HAP involvement is completed.



**Partners:** Schuylkill County Conservation District, PA DEP Bureau of Watershed Management, Clearfield Area High School, and PA Senior Environment Corps.

### **Appalachian Trail Protection Initiative** – Cong. Districts 9, 11, 15, 17, 19

HAP is assisting the National Park Service and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy with their effort to increase the buffer along the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (AT) in Pennsylvania in areas where the “wild” AT experience is vulnerable to development and degradation.

#### HAP Efforts (ongoing):

Development of workshops and educational materials for the 58 municipalities through which the AT runs in PA, to inform them of the AT Protection Act of 2008 (a state law requiring them to use their zoning authority to preserve the AT and protect the natural, scenic, historic and aesthetic resources along the trail). HAP involvement with municipalities on this project is on-going.



**Partners:** PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources, PA Dept. of Community and Economic Development, National Park Service, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, National Audubon Society, ten county planning offices, numerous local land trusts, hiking trail clubs, and other local conservation groups.

**Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Project** – Cong. Districts 9, 11, 15, 17, 19  
HAP is working with Pennsylvania state agencies and the National Audubon Society to advance the Kittatinny Conservation Project, a collective effort to protect Pennsylvania’s most notable ridge, also known as Blue Mountain. Conservation work on this 250-mile long ridge will provide insight on how to better protect other vulnerable forested ridges that are under tremendous pressure due to housing and commercial development, and construction of industrial wind-energy facilities.



The Kittatinny Ridge provides drinking water for dozens of communities and more than 600,000 people in Pennsylvania from its numerous headwaters and recharge of valley wells. It is host to pristine wildlife and game habitat, and is a globally-recognized fall migration corridor for tens of thousands of hawks and eagles annually. In addition, the ridge is the leading edge of the Appalachian forest ecosystem in Pennsylvania, and the most continuous of all the ridges in the state—serving as a critical ecological connector between the northern and southern Appalachian forests.

HAP staff time toward the project since 2006 has helped to guide the expenditure of more than \$400,000 in DCNR grant funds to non-profit partner conservation groups for planning, education, land protection, and municipal assistance. This planning and implementation guidance is on-going.

Additional HAP Efforts (completed):

- Acquired \$30,000 grant to support municipal planning workshops in the most vulnerable areas of the ridge with local officials, stakeholders and residents.
- Conducted numerous public education programs; and coordinated invasive species removal and native plantings.
- Developed GIS maps of priority lands for local land trust protection efforts.
- Conducted a municipal zoning analysis of vulnerable “hot spots.”

**Adding Value to Abandoned Mine Reclamation Projects**

Congressional Districts 3, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17

HAP is working with the PA DEP Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation (BAMR) to identify active and planned reclamation projects that intersect with other agency interests for restoring brook trout habitat or improving recreation or greenway corridors. BAMR field offices oversee the reclamation of old, abandoned mine land sites throughout the Appalachian/coal region of the state, and is not usually pro-active in contacting other agencies to work cooperatively on improvements.

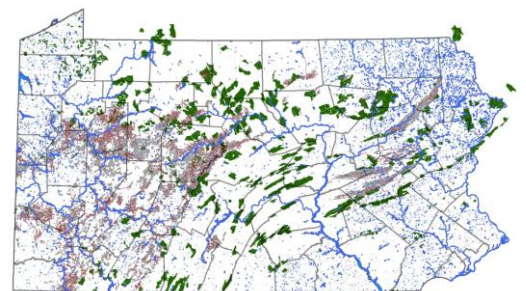


HAP Efforts (on-going):

- Mapping multiple agency interests to identify areas of high overlap. Coordinating meetings of agency representatives to communicate and plan projects for multiple benefits.
- Finding partners for BAMR’s riparian restoration work to include elements that add value for recreation, ecology and local economics; such as trail construction, in-stream habitat structures, and acquisition of property enabling public stream access.

**PA Waters and Lands Assessment** – Congressional Districts: All PA districts

HAP is coordinating the development of a GIS-based analysis of Pennsylvania’s most ecologically-important lands and waters, and an analysis of the gaps that exist in connective corridors. Working with GIS staff from EPA, a computer model with maps will guide HAP’s work by identifying: 1) priority ecological hubs for protection efforts; and 2) priority areas for restoration that will help repair broken ecological connections between hubs.



This assessment will also prove useful to other government programs, and can serve as a model for other states wanting a green infrastructure mapping tool to identify priority areas for land acquisition, riparian and headwater protection work, wetlands mitigation projects, greenway planning, or corridors for species movement due to climate change.