

## Fishing Creek Watershed

The Watershed, with Fishing Creek as its central artery, is a 450 square mile region, encompassing one of Pennsylvania's finest recreational areas. The watershed spreads into five counties including southern Sullivan, northern Columbia, and western Luzerne counties, with small tributaries extending from SW Lycoming and NW Montour counties. The mouth of Fishing Creek empties into the Susquehanna River near Bloomsburg and the waters are carried into the Chesapeake Bay.

### Natural History

The Fishing Creek Watershed drainage is in the heart of the Appalachian Mountains extending from Maine to Georgia. These are some of the oldest mountains on earth. This area lies over a formation of gray sandstone and conglomerates, and the deeper valleys have eroded through this formation to rock strata consisting of reddish brown shale and sandstone. A major portion of the Watershed is forested consisting of northern hardwood and transition types with associated species of plants and animals adapted specifically to this habitat. The region is presently rural with farming a primary physical and economic component.

### So What's the Problem?

Factors both internal and external to the region deteriorate the health and quality of the Watershed's ecosystem. For example, airborne pollutants from outside the area create acid rain, which seriously affect terrestrial and aquatic habitats. Within the Watershed, improper land use can result in soil erosion, flooding, and habitat destruction and fragmentation. The health of the Watershed and its ecosystem affects the quality of life and economic well being of local people and those downstream.

## The Fishing Creek Watershed Association (FCWA):

The Association is made up of people working together and coordinating efforts to improve the quality of the watershed. FCWA joins with local, state and federal agencies, municipal, county, state and federal officials, business and industry, educational institutions and any other groups with similar interests and goals. The FCWA supports the following objectives within the watershed.

- Reduction of soil erosion
- Control of flood damage
- Restoration of wildlife
- Protection recreation areas of great natural beauty
- Elimination of all stream pollution
- Improvement of the habitat of streams



### Reducing Soil Erosion

Maintaining fertile topsoil and eliminating runoff are important factors in a healthy ecosystem. FCWA encourages best management practices, including contour farming, forest stream buffers, sustainable timbering practices, and stream bank fencing. The Association assists in educating landowners and helping to uncover funding sources for environment friendly practices.



### Controlling Flood Damage

Coupled with proper planning, sound conservation and environmental practices can mitigate flood damage within the Watershed. FCWA promotes education and provides information to help lessen the effects of high water. For instance, maintenance of wetlands and other natural water catchment areas minimizes runoff during heavy rains.



### Restoring Wildlife

A healthy habitat is the means to a re-invigorated wildlife population, including normal insect hatches, healthy fish populations, natural forests, wild meadows, and stable bird, reptile and mammal populations. FCWA provides education and projects to improve wildlife habitat and population.



### Providing Recreation

An ecologically sound environment is the foundation for activities such as camping, biking, hunting, fishing, and hiking. By encouraging people, organizations, and communities to work together FCWA supports planning and implementation of outdoor recreation within the Watershed.



### Eliminating Pollution

Acid rain is an identified problem affecting the Watershed's environment. By monitoring the chemical, physical, and biological qualities of the watershed, FCWA provides the qualitative and quantitative data necessary to carryout programs to alleviate pollution effects. One example project is limestone insertion directly into streambed to improve water alkalinity and reduce the effects of acid runoff.



### Improving Habitat

Healthy watershed habitat especially near streams and tributaries is critical to the ecosystem. FCWA uses education and existing programs to provide information and assistance to landowners for habitat improvement; streamside fencing is an example.