



## The History of the Morris Creek Watershed Association (Rev 2013820)

The Morris Creek Watershed is located approximately 25 miles southeast of Charleston, WV near the town of Montgomery on Morris Creek; a tributary of the upper Kanawha River. Identified as a HUC 8 05050006 AN-code WVK-70, includes Schuyler Fork WVK-70-A, Gibson Hollow WVK-70-B, Fitzgerald Branch WVK-70-C and Young's Branch WVK-70-D. The watershed spans a little over 5.2 miles, north to south, and covers approximately seven and a half square miles. The elevation at the source of the drainage is approximately one thousand eight hundred feet above sea level and drops to about six hundred and forty feet above sea level at the mouth where it joins the Kanawha River. Morris Creek has an average drop of two hundred twenty eight feet per linear mile across the watershed.

Many years ago Morris Creek supported aquatic life such as crawfish, minnows, lizards, frogs, pockets of pan fish, and a variety of small aquatic creatures that resided in our stream bed. For nearly 40 years, the lower portion of our stream was basically dead of aquatic life, with areas of swamps (or vats) of "Yellow Boy". There were also areas of impairment from iron and aluminum precipitating out of the water, and onto the streambed. These toxins come from past unregulated coal mining practices as well as a previously active landfill containing many different types of hazardous materials. Our stream had become an unsafe place for local children and nearby residents.

Contaminated drainage negatively affects the health and well being of the watershed and the surrounding community. We have experienced increasingly high cancer death rates, far exceeding the norm, and we suspect this is due to the toxic contamination. Our local properties have been de-valued by land scars, abandoned mine drainage, severely stained streambeds, unnecessary eyesores, and many safety hazards within the community. Improper reclamation practices from pre-law mining activities have impeded future economic growth potential of our local area.

In early fall of 2001 several grass-root citizens took the initiative to organize and restore the environment to its previous pristine condition. On March 21, 2002 the Morris Creek Watershed Association, Inc. (MCWA) was officially formed and consisted of four officers, twenty-two directors, and a total of about forty-five members. The MCWA's principal place of business is currently located at 328 Morris Drive, Montgomery, WV, 25136, in Fayette County, West Virginia.

The association's mailing address: PO Box 927, Montgomery, WV 25136

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**Facebook:** Morris Creek Watershed

MCWA is a non-profit organization made up of local citizens with a mission to improve the safety of the Morris Creek watershed, restore its natural beauty, and provide recreational opportunities. MCWA's goals are to return the Morris Creek watershed to a safe environment for all residents while restoring the water quality to a condition capable of supporting both aquatic life and local recreational activities.

Together with the help of our partners, we have brought in approximately two million dollars to the watershed, resulting in a significant difference to our community, and the surrounding environment.

To date, we have removed 178.2 tons of solid waste, remediated four Acid Mine Drainage sites, restored three out of four phases of our stream bank stabilization project, planted over 2000 trees including 200 native chestnuts, reintroduced three species of trout to our waters, and constructed five K-dams to increase cover and habitat for the aquatic life.

We are proud to be part of the Office of Suffice Mining AmeriCorps VISTA program. To date, we have had 4 part time and three full time VISTA positions through the Appalachian Coal Country Team. Each AmeriCorps VISTA has helped develop and implement our many ongoing programs. We also work closely with the Coal Heritage Highway Authority and the UKVEDC.

In 2009 Morris Creek received a \$5,000 EPA Brownfield Focus Grant and from this grant received a \$32,000 Brownfield Land Revitalization Grant to develop the business plan and environmental assessment requirements to pursue the construction of the Community Education and Energy Learning Center. Working with SRA team from the EPA we have developed a working business plan to start the next phase to start building a building.

Morris Creek Watershed hosts the Morris Creek Reunion, Project WET, WVSOS, Will Harmon Stream Mechanics Workshop and numerous student outings, Partners with Trout Unlimited for Trout in the Classroom, wildlife habitat improvements, and many other outreach and environmental educational programs. WVUIT professor Deb Beutler has identified 159 species of birds from her point count study.

Working with TU, WVDNR, WVDEP, AML and WVUIT a study limestone fines for Acid Mine Drainage remediation. 270 tons have been introduced so far with very favorable results. 4 treatment sites have been selected and are being monitored. We have installed an experimental Swedish Tank Design that is showing promise as a new way to treat acid Mine Drainage.

MCWA has received grants from the Department of Energy and installed a prototype Hydro generator on our Lower Mainstem site. The out flow from mine discharge is generating 1300 watts of electricity that will be used as an educational opportunity for students and to charge the water monitoring equipment for MCWA. We are also using the electrical output to design an electrical treatment process that is showing great success for the treatment of AMD, WVDEP, AML, WVUIT, Marshall, DOE and the Army National Guard will be partnering with us to oversee the project.

Morris Creek Watershed educational outreach team has hosted over 4000 visitors to our area designed and is conducting "The Energy Tour" This will give students and interested participants a chance to see firsthand all our energy producing industries and the impacts to our economic, social, environmental, and communities. This past July we host over 200 Boy Scouts and 10 NCCC's workers from our site to complete many community projects.