

## The Challenge

The West Branch Susquehanna River drains approximately 4.4 million acres of Northcentral Pennsylvania - *an area twice the size of Yellowstone National Park.*

The watershed presents enormous recreational opportunities, and contains a *large percentage of all public land in Pennsylvania:*

- More than 1.4 million acres of state forests
- 250,000 acres of state game lands
- 29,000 acres of state parks.

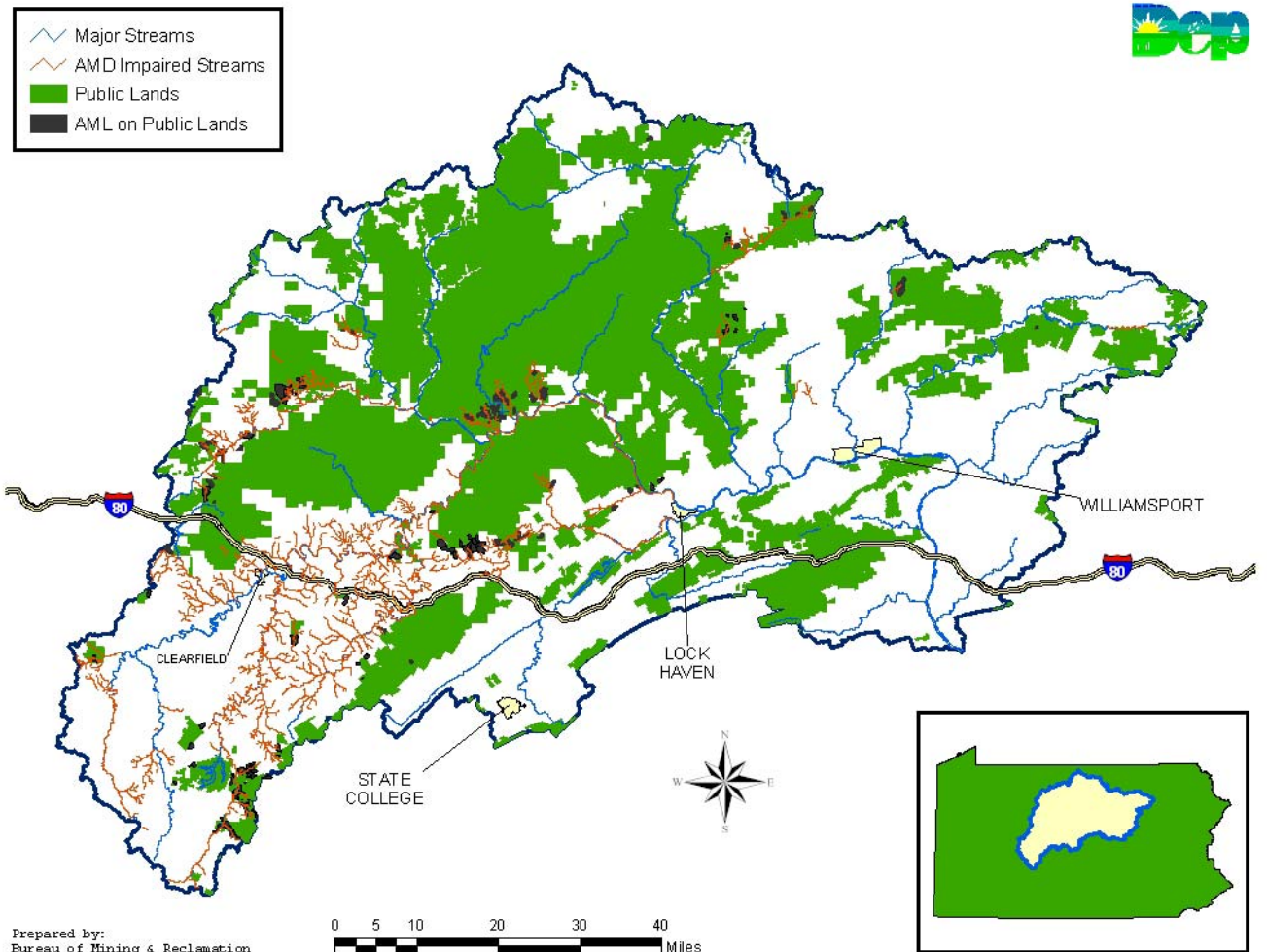
Unfortunately, the West Branch watershed is plagued by historic pollution - thousands of acres of abandoned mine lands that poison the river and its tributaries with sediment and acid mine drainage.



Highly acidic, metal and sulfur-laden mine drainage impairs over 1,100 miles of the main stem and its tributaries - *making this one of the largest concentrations of polluted waters in the nation.*

Abandoned mines present a dangerous mix of hidden shafts, steep cliffs, unstable piles of mine waste, and dilapidated buildings and equipment. More people are killed in abandoned mines each year than in all active underground mines in Pennsylvania.

## West Branch Susquehanna Watershed Mine Drainage Impaired Streams / Abandoned Mine Lands / Public Lands



Reclaiming abandoned mine and industrial sites in the watershed is an essential step toward restoring the health of this waterway and improving the quality of life for communities in the region. Advances in abandoned mine drainage treatment, including modern reclamation and mining practices have resulted in many success stories throughout Pennsylvania, but this work is costly and requires extensive cooperation and planning.

**Our challenge** is to view each problem as part of the larger watershed, join with other organizations that share our goals, and determine how to best allocate our resources to restore and protect this valuable natural resource.

**We invite you to become part of this New Vision for the West Branch Susquehanna River.**

## **A New Vision For the West Branch Susquehanna Watershed**

In colonial times the West Branch Susquehanna River provided an important water route to the Ohio River valley.

A thriving lumber industry and the discovery of vast coal reserves in the 18th century made the entire watershed a significant industrial resource for Pennsylvania and the world.

Coal mining operations in the region helped to fuel America's Industrial Revolution, and the historic significance of Pennsylvania's mineral riches cannot be ignored.

But the pollution problems experienced in the West Branch watershed today are a legacy that our forefathers did not anticipate in their drive for progress.

**For this watershed today, there is a new vision:**

- ✓ Restore water quality in the West Branch Susquehanna River and its tributaries in the next decade, and
- ✓ Protect and preserve this vast natural resource for future generations.

**Realizing this new vision will create opportunities for all Pennsylvanians:**

- ✓ Improved quality of life for residents and visitors to the region.
- ✓ Boating, hunting, camping, hiking and other recreation along some of the most wild and remote waters east of the Mississippi.
- ✓ Thriving habitat for sustainable populations of a variety of sport fish including trout, walleye, muskie, and bass.
- ✓ Rejuvenated former mining and lumber towns with new economic opportunities.

## **Getting Started**

The first ever  
"West Branch Susquehanna River  
Restoration Symposium"  
will be held at the Penn Stater Conference  
Center and Hotel in State College, PA  
May 6 & 7, 2005

**This is an opportunity for individuals and environmental organizations in the watershed to meet Task Force members and get involved in this exciting and far-reaching initiative.**

**For More Information call Amy Wolfe  
of Trout Unlimited (570) 726-3118**



*Brochure Prepared By*  
**THE WEST BRANCH SUSQUEHANNA  
TASK FORCE**

- PA Department of Environmental Protection
- PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- PA Department of Community and Economic Development
- PA Fish and Boat Commission
- PA Game Commission
- US Dept. of Interior, Office of Surface Mining
- Trout Unlimited
- The Susquehanna River Basin Commission
- Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
- Western PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Rec.
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- Western Pennsylvania Watershed Program
- PA Environmental Council

## **Restoring the West Branch Susquehanna River**



## **Today's Vision ! Tomorrow's Opportunities !**

**May 6 & 7, 2005**

**Penn Stater  
Conference Center & Hotel**

**State College, PA**