

WV-VA WATER QUALITY MONITORING PROJECT

Background

West Virginia is currently experiencing shale gas development and drilling may begin in Virginia in the future. This type of development holds the potential for new impacts on coldwater resources. Trout Unlimited (TU) has initiated a program to make sure the best coldwater streams are protected. Ideally, volunteers on this project will provide an extra set of eyes and ears on the ground to help agencies and industry minimize potential pollution incidents.



Project

TU and its West Virginia and Virginia Councils are partnering with the West Virginia Rivers Coalition (WVRC) to initiate a new volunteer water quality monitoring program. The program will focus on training volunteers to monitor coldwater resources in West Virginia and Virginia that have the potential to be impacted by the increasing shale gas development.



The goals of the project are twofold.

First, to educate volunteers about the potential impacts to fish and wildlife resources in the shale gas region of West Virginia and Virginia and train volunteers to effectively monitor the water quality in these areas. And second, to work with these trained volunteers to conduct water quality monitoring in all priority watersheds that have been identified by WVRC and TU's science team as critical for protecting ecologically significant lands and waters.

TU and WVRC will be holding trainings across the state for their members as well as other interested anglers in the areas of West Virginia and Virginia that may be affected by the shale gas drilling. These volunteers will be trained to collect measurements for water and air temperature, conductivity, turbidity, water flow (cross-sectional area), and to conduct visual assessments of landscape changes. A Field Manual will be provided to each volunteer to assist him or her with their monitoring efforts. Monitoring kits will be provided to be shared among groups located within proximity to one another. Volunteers will be assigned specific monitoring locations based upon (1) volunteer interest, and (2) a regional monitoring strategy developed by TU to prioritize coldwater streams that are most at risk from impacts.

Contact Information

To learn more about the WV-VA Water Quality Monitoring Project and how you can get involved please contact **Jaimie Holmes** at **304-614-6699** or at **jholmes@tu.org**.

After the initial water quality monitoring training, TU's WV-VA Water Quality Monitoring Coordinator will work with the trained volunteers to establish a water quality monitoring strategy to assure coverage of WVRC and TU's priority watersheds. To ensure that volunteers are actively monitoring and reporting data, there will be a monthly phone call for trained volunteers to discuss ongoing monitoring efforts and results and to discuss technical challenges.



Trout Unlimited's (TU) West Virginia and Virginia Coldwater Conservation Corps is a partnership between Trout Unlimited, the West Virginia Council of Trout Unlimited, the Virginia Council of Trout Unlimited, the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, and the program is made possible by funding from the Appalachian Stewardship Foundation.