



OSM/VISTA Kelly's Creek Communities Association, WV

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Twenty miles southeast of Charleston, beginning in Coon Dog Hollow and emptying into the Kanawha River, is Kelly's Creek. Kelly's Creek Watershed encompasses seven rural communities, all of which are facing economic and environmental stagnation and decline. Through the placement of two OSM/VISTAs, these Kanawha County communities are moving forward in their efforts to improve their quality of life. The communities within the Kelly's Creek Watershed are facing several challenges. With the abandonment and deterioration of industries, chemical plants, and area coal mining, the watershed's infrastructure has weakened significantly.



Compounding the problem is the environmental degradation that was a bi-product of these once-prospering revenue sources. From acid mine drainage to high levels of fecal coliform bacteria, the environmental health of the watershed is in desperate need of attention. It is the mission of the OSM/VISTAs working in Kelly's Creek to help the watershed communities deal with these environmental issues so that economic development may occur. Though the watershed has made some progress in terms of water monitoring and assessment in the past three years, it is the Brownfields pilot project that is of primary importance to residents and volunteers at this time. Thanks to the 2001 OSM/VISTA, Kelly's Creek Communities Association was able to attain a Brownfields grant. This pilot project will assess the entire watershed and methodically reach a conclusion for how to most effectively remediate and develop the area.

Kelly's Creek Communities Association sponsors two OSM/VISTAs. The Watershed VISTA will be key in developing and maintaining monitoring and assessment records of the watershed, leading to a stream bank restoration project with the Army Corps of Engineers. A new edition to the team at Kelly's Creek is the OSM/VISTA Brownfields Coordinator. This OSM/VISTA will be working with the project's engineering team and the watershed's constituents through each step of the Brownfields process. Both volunteers are responsible for keeping members of the watershed informed through town forums, press releases, and newsletter articles.

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