



# Central Appalachia Habitat Stewardship Program

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## PARTNERS

- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- Richard King Mellon Foundation
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- AstraZeneca

## ABOUT NFWF

Chartered by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Working with federal, corporate and individual partners, NFWF has funded more than 6,000 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of \$7.4 billion.

Learn more at [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org)

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Cerulean warbler

## OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Forest Service, Richard King Mellon Foundation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, AstraZeneca and Bezos Earth Fund announced a 2022 round of funding for Central Appalachia Habitat Stewardship Program projects. Eleven new or continuing reforestation of legacy mine lands, forest habitat management for birds and restoration of aquatic connectivity grants totaling \$3.7 million were awarded. The 11 awards announced generated \$3.8 million in matching contributions from the grantees, providing a total conservation impact of \$7.5 million.

Created in 2017, the overall goal of the program is to improve the quality and connectivity of forest and freshwater habitat in order to increase the distribution and abundance of birds, fish and other wildlife, as evidenced by a suite of species that collectively are indicators of forest and freshwater habitat condition. Specifically, the program seeks to improve the management of public and private forestlands to create large blocks with a mosaic of mixed-age forests for focal bird species and improve stream health by removing passage barriers, restoring riparian buffers, and improving water quality and hydrology to bolster populations of eastern brook trout, eastern hellbender and native freshwater mussels.

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Golden-winged warbler

#### **Managing Forests to Restore Diverse Habitats through Public-Private Partnerships and Market-Based Incentives (MD, PA)**

Grantee: Indiana University of Pennsylvania Research Institute  
 Grant Amount: ..... \$500,000  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$481,700  
 Total Project Amount: ..... \$981,700

Develop and implement forest management plans that create habitat for diverse forest bird species on state-owned and neighboring privately owned lands. Project will develop a dynamic forest management plan for one new forest block, implement forest management practices in five established dynamic forest blocks and promote market-based incentives for private landowners to practice oak silviculture.

#### **Engaging Private Landowners in Forest Management that Improves Habitat for Diverse Forest Bird Species (PA)**

Grantee: Ruffed Grouse Society  
 Grant Amount: ..... \$498,500  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$509,200  
 Total Project Amount: ..... \$1,007,700

Expand the delivery of technical and financial assistance to private landowners to create young forest habitat for golden-winged warblers and mature forest habitat for wood thrush and carbon storage. Project will result in the improvement of 1,200 acres of habitat for golden winged warblers and wood thrush, and will engage hundreds of local volunteers in hands-on projects.

#### **Improving Eastern Brook Trout and Eastern Hellbender Strongholds in the Headwaters of the Greenbrier River (WV)**

Grantee: Trout Unlimited  
 Grant Amount: ..... \$488,300

Matching Funds: ..... \$736,800  
 Total Project Amount: ..... \$1,225,100

Improve eastern brook trout and eastern hellbender strongholds across public and private lands in the headwaters of the Greenbrier River in West Virginia. Project will work with state, federal, and non-governmental partners to remove two barriers to fish passage, connect 28 miles of aquatic habitat, and will help seven private landowners protect and restore aquatic habitat by implementing conservation practices on 500 acres.

#### **Restoring the Ecology of Legacy Coal Mines on Public Lands (WV)**

Grantee: Green Forests Work  
 Grant Amount: ..... \$443,900  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$239,100  
 Total Project Amount: ..... \$683,000

Restore native forest to previously mined sites in the New River Gorge National Park and Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia. Project will restore red spruce forest habitat on 274 acres of legacy mine lands, planting approximately 184,000 trees that will provide vital wildlife habitat while also improving air and water quality and creating carbon storage.

#### **Restoring and Reconnecting Habitat for Brook Trout, Hellbenders and Mussels in the Clarion River and Tionesta Creek Watersheds (PA)**

Grantee: Western Pennsylvania Conservancy  
 Grant Amount: ..... \$404,800  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$116,300  
 Total Project Amount: ..... \$521,100

Restore and reconnect aquatic habitats for eastern brook trout, eastern hellbender and freshwater mussels within the Allegheny National Forest and neighboring state lands.

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Project will remove one dam and replace four failing culverts at road-stream crossings that will provide access to 5 miles of upstream habitat, and will enhance in-stream habitat with large woody material along 15 miles of stream.

### **Restoring Forest Habitat on Privately Owned Legacy Mine Lands in Western Pennsylvania**

Grantee: Green Forests Work

Grant Amount: ..... \$365,800

Matching Funds: ..... \$207,400

Total Project Amount: ..... \$573,200

Restore forest habitat on privately owned legacy minelands in Clearfield and Jefferson counties in western Pennsylvania that will benefit birds and pollinators, especially those that rely on young forest habitat. Project will re-establish native forest cover on approximately 300 acres through the planting of approximately 210,000 native tree and shrub seedlings that, in the long-term, will improve forest structural diversity, enhance water and air quality, and increase carbon storage.

### **Enhancing Assessment and Restoration of Aquatic Organism Passages through Improved Collaboration (PA)**

Grantee: Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

Grant Amount: ..... \$284,400

Matching Funds: ..... \$229,600

Total Project Amount: ..... \$514,000

Partner with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission to prioritize and coordinate efforts to improve aquatic connectivity through barrier removals. Project will use geospatial analysis to prioritize barrier removals based on conservation need and will collaborate with state agencies, nonprofits and academic institutions to remove at least 10 priority barriers.

### **Using Carbon Markets to Create Forest Habitat on Legacy Mine Lands in Central Appalachia (PA)**

Grantee: United States Endowment for Forestry and Communities

Grant Amount: ..... \$250,000

Matching Funds: ..... \$655,500

Total Project Amount: ..... \$905,500

Implement forest restoration on privately owned legacy minelands in Pennsylvania and place conservation easements on participating properties that will increase the ability of landowners to sell carbon credits to offset some of their financial investment. Project will plant 170,000 new trees to create needed young forest habitat, offer permanent protection for these trees and demonstrate a financing model that can be replicated elsewhere in Appalachia.

### **Increasing Pittsburgh's Urban Tree Canopy While Creating Jobs for Chronically Unemployed Residents (PA)**

Grantee: Friends of the Pittsburgh Urban Forest

Grant Amount: ..... \$207,400

Matching Funds: ..... \$288,000

Total Project Amount: ..... \$495,400

Collaborate with 20 nonprofits to expand Pittsburgh's



Eastern hellbender

urban tree canopy, create new green jobs, and address inequity in canopy coverage in underserved communities. Project will plant 2,375 trees targeting low-canopy priority equity investment areas, and will partner with a workforce development organization to employ chronically unemployed residents to conduct ongoing maintenance.

### **A Collaborative and Multi-Species Approach to Conservation Planning in Central Appalachia (PA)**

Grantee: Trout Unlimited

Grant Amount: ..... \$189,400

Matching Funds: ..... \$248,300

Total Project Amount: ..... \$437,700

Enhance populations of brook trout, eastern hellbender, and native freshwater mussels in the Tionesta Creek and Clarion River watersheds. Project will work with partners to develop and implement a multi-year conservation plan to achieve stream restoration goals for wildlife and habitat, and build capacity to deliver conservation through hands-on training, initially focused on designing road-stream crossings.

### **Deploying Automated Acoustic Recorders to Monitoring of Bird Species within Dynamic Forest Restoration Blocks (PA)**

Grantee: University of Pittsburgh

Grant Amount: ..... \$81,900

Matching Funds: ..... \$84,600

Total Project Amount: ..... \$166,500

Expand the use of automated acoustic recorders to monitor populations of golden-winged warbler, wood thrush, cerulean warbler, and four additional avian focal species, in two dynamic forest restoration blocks in Pennsylvania. Project will deploy 350 recorders in the 2023 field season, analyze the recordings utilizing machine learning and expert human listeners, and estimate species occupancy and abundance at each site using statistical models to validate investments in habitat enhancement.