



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Pittsburgh District

News Release

Public Affairs Office
1000 Liberty Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Release No. 04-308

Contact: Karen L. Auer, 412-395-7501

Karen.L.Auer@usace.army.mil

WATER FLOWS AT NANTY GLO

NANTY GLO, PENNSYLVANIA – Valves were opened and water flowed bringing the concept of improved water quality to reality at the Nanty Glo Ecosystem Restoration Project last week. Water from the abandoned Webster Mine began flowing into a passive treatment system designed to remove acid mine drainage pollutants and promote restoration of the aquatic ecosystem of approximately five miles of the South Branch of Blacklick Creek, from Nanty Glo to Vintondale in Cambria County, Pennsylvania.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ecosystem restoration projects are initiated by public interest and authorized by Congress in public law. The Nanty Glo Ecosystem Restoration Project was accomplished through a partnership between the Cambria County Conservation and Recreation Authority (CCCRA) and the Corps' Pittsburgh District. In addition to providing 25% of the approximate \$4 million construction cost, the CCCRA worked with the Corps to plan and design this project from a conceptual study of acid mine drainage problems in the Conemaugh River Basin through the many details and technical challenges of construction.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation provided the CCCRA a Growing Greener Grant of over \$600,000 and an additional \$400,000 directly through DEP abandoned mine funding as well as technical assistance during the design and construction of the project. Others who contributed time, money and expertise to make this important ecosystem restoration project a reality include the U.S. Department of Interior's Office of Surface Mining, the Western Pennsylvania Watershed Protection Program, the Blacklick Creek Watershed Association, the Blacklick Valley Industrial Development Association, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, the Borough of Nanty Glo and the local property owners.

Acid drainage from the Webster Mine, which contributes a significant amount of the total abandoned mine drainage pollution to the Blacklick Creek Watershed, was discharging directly into Pergrin Run. Now the mine water is piped from the mine, under State Route 271 and Pergrin Run, into the passive treatment system constructed on 19-acres between Pergrin Run and the South Branch of Blacklick Creek. The water flows into two settling ponds which filter the water through a mixture of limestone and mushroom compost. This process adds alkalinity to the water, raising the pH level from around 2.0 (similar to battery acid) to close to neutral (7.0 pH). Raising the pH causes the dissolved metals in the water, primarily iron and aluminum, to "drop out" of the water in the ponds. Next, the water flows into the "finishing" wetland which completes raising the pH to slightly above neutral. The water, now able to sustain aquatic life, is discharged into Pergrin Run which flows into the South Branch of Blacklick Creek just downstream of the treatment system. The improved water also helps to further neutralize and buffer water in the stream from other acid mine drainage sources.

Ecosystem restoration is directed at different sized ecosystems – complex ones encompassing multiple states, more localized watersheds, or a single stream aquatic habitat. The Nanty Glo Ecosystem Restoration Project, directed at the South Branch of Blacklick Creek, will also improve Blacklick Creek to Conemaugh River Lake. So this project, while directed at a single stream, is beneficial as far downstream as Blairsville and to the many visitors to Conemaugh River Lake who enjoy an improving aquatic habitat which already supports a surprisingly good fishery in some areas.

-30-

www.lrp.usace.army.mil



In Nanty Glo, where once stood old coal tipples and buildings, is now a system of ponds and wetlands used to treat the orange acid water that flows out of the old Webster Mine.