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Title: Rural Action Watershed Restoration Program: Partnering to Improve the Future

Presenter: Nathan Schlater, Monday Creek Watershed Coordinator, Rural Action; Michelle Shively, Sunday Creek Watershed Coordinator, Rural Action

P.O. Box 129, 115 W. Main St.  
New Straitsville, OH 43766.

Phone: (740) 394-2047

Email: [water@mondaycreek.org](mailto:water@mondaycreek.org)

Abstract Body: Rural Action has been working to restore Appalachian Ohio's watersheds for over 15 years. Primarily working to restore streams that have been impacted by our regions vast history of coal mining, Rural Action and many partners have improved water quality for local communities allowing fish and insects to return to streams where they could not live before because of pollution.

The Rural Action Watershed Restoration Program is committed to restoring and preserving water quality through collaboration, community engagement, conservation, and education in pursuit of a healthy ecosystem capable of supporting people and nature. Currently, four watersheds are being restored: Monday Creek, Sunday Creek, Huff Run and Mud Run. These watersheds are located in six Ohio counties: Athens, Hocking, Perry, Morgan, Tuscarawas and Carroll.

Collaboration with more than 20 partners including local residents, history groups, universities and state and federal agencies has lead to the installation of 26 treatment systems, over 110 subsidence hole closures and 55 acres of gob piles reclaimed throughout the four watersheds. Over 23 million dollars has been leveraged by the Rural Action Watershed Restoration Program to improve watershed health and provide educational opportunities within the watershed communities.

The partnership has resulted in: 30 species of fish now living in Monday Creek, a stream that was once considered dead; prevention of more than 700 tons of acid from entering our stream annually; improvement of 72 stream miles within the four Rural Action Watersheds.

Numerous chemical and biological samples are collected annually through a partnership between Rural Action Watershed Restoration Program, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, Ohio University and volunteers. Samples are collected and analyzed by Rural Action, ODNR and OEPA. Monitoring results are housed in a public database ([watersheddata.com](http://watersheddata.com)) that is managed by Ohio University Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs.