



These photographs detail the stream before and after the restoration.

Stream Restoration Project in Big Prater Creek

The Department of Mines, Mineral, and Energy's Division of Mined Land Reclamation (DMLR) completes an important step toward Big Prater Creek restoration in Buchanan County.

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By Joey O'Quinn

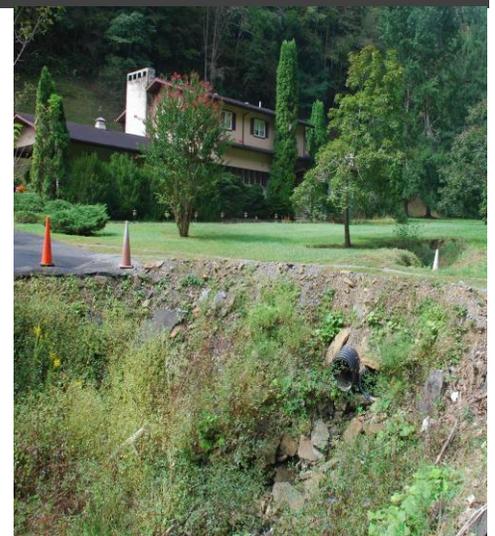
The Prater Creek stream restoration project has resulted in the re-establishment of approximately 800 feet of tributary in Big Prater Creek near Vansant, Virginia. DMLR was a partner with Virginia's Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the land holder in completing this important step in the recovery of the watershed and the reduction of pollution to the Levisa Fork River in Buchanan County.

The tributary had been impacted by the placement of coal mine spoil and waste rock directly in the stream channel during the 1970's. The stream was totally filled over and a pipe had been placed to divert the water under the spoil and waste rock. During a significant flood event in 2006 the pipe blocked and failed.

The tributary impounded behind the fill until it eventually overtopped – resulting in erosion and stability problems on the downstream area of the fill. A portion of an access road across the lower part of the fill also failed and added sediment to the stream. The stream continued infiltration through the fill and eroding material into the stream.

The coal mine spoil and waste rock was excavated from the stream and the old pipe removed. After the stream was cleared a new crossing was constructed to connect the property to the state highway. A retaining wall was put in place and the stream channel re-established. The site was vegetated.

The tributary now flows in its approximate original location and there is no more coal mine spoil to erode into Big Prater Creek and the Levisa Fork River. A serious safety hazard was eliminated and a significant source of sedimentation has been removed.



This photograph shows the previously eroded stream bed.

VA DEPT OF MINERALS AND ENERGY
DIVISION OF MINED LAND RECLAMATION
WATER QUALITY NEWS LETTER

P.O. Drawer 900
Big Stone Gap VA 24219