



## **Secretary Salazar Presents West Virginia Watershed Network with *Partners in Conservation* Award**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar presented a *Partners in Conservation Award* on May, 7<sup>th</sup> to the West Virginia Watershed Network for exemplary service in promoting watershed conservation.

The award recognizes the watershed network for empowering the residents of West Virginia in managing water resources through informal partnerships with state and federal agencies including Interior’s Office of Surface Mining and nonprofit groups.

Through a partnership that has spanned nearly a decade, participants in the West Virginia Watershed Network and the Office of Surface Mining Charleston Field Office hope to improve water quality, habitat, and aquatic life in streams in West Virginia.

This award is one of 26 national awards to individuals and organizations presented at a ceremony at Interior headquarters in Washington, D.C. to honor “those who achieve natural resource goals in collaboration and partnership with others.”

The 26 Partners in Conservation Awards recognize conservation achievements resulting from the cooperation and participation of a total of 600 individuals and organizations including landowners; citizens’ groups; private sector and nongovernmental organizations; and federal, state, local, and/or tribal governments.

“The Partners in Conservation Awards demonstrate that our greatest conservation legacies often emerge when stakeholders, agencies, and citizens from a wide range of backgrounds come together to address shared challenges,” the Secretary said.

The West Virginia Watershed Network conducted a statewide forum to discuss permits required when conducting remedial work in or adjacent to West Virginia streams and wetlands. The result was the publication of the *Stream Disturbance Permit Booklet*. The booklet described all the various stream disturbance permits and is available at [http://www.wvca.us/wvwn/wvwn\\_publications.cfm](http://www.wvca.us/wvwn/wvwn_publications.cfm).

“These 26 awards recognize the dedicated efforts of people from all walks of life, from across our nation– and from across our borders with Canada and Mexico,” Salazar noted. “They celebrate partnerships that conserve and restore our nation’s treasured landscapes and watersheds, partnerships that engage Native American communities, and partnerships that engage youth.”

**The following groups and individuals share this *Partners in Conservation Award*:**

**Appalachian Coal Country Watershed Team**

April Trent

**Canaan Valley Institute**

Todd Miller

**Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement**

Rick Buckley

Roger Calhoun

**West Virginia Conservation Agency**

Truman Wolfe

**West Virginia Division of Natural Resources**

Jim Reed

**West Virginia Division of Regulatory and Environmental Affairs**

Christina Richmond

**West Virginia Division of Water and Waste Management**

Teresa Koon

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**The Appalachian Coal Country Watershed Team** is a coalition of change-minded grassroots-level watershed improvement groups determined to repair the environmental degradation left from historic coal mining while creating economic stability needed in our rural communities. With its Support Office located in Beckley, W. Va., the ACCWT works throughout an eight state Appalachian region (Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, Virginia., West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee and Alabama) with

unified goals to: build local capacity, monitor water quality, enhance outreach and education, engage redevelopment and require professional development.

The Team is supported by an innovative partnership between AmeriCorps VISTA and the Office of Surface Mining. The ACCWT began in 2002 as an OSM/VISTA initiative, placing determined college-trained OSM/VISTA Volunteers in a year of service in rural mining communities. Reflecting the needs and the determination of the communities they serve, the ACCWT currently has 36 OSM/VISTAs in the field with another 24 positions funded under the Recovery Act and 20 Summer Associates starting this spring/summer.