Central Appalachia Habitat Stewardship Program

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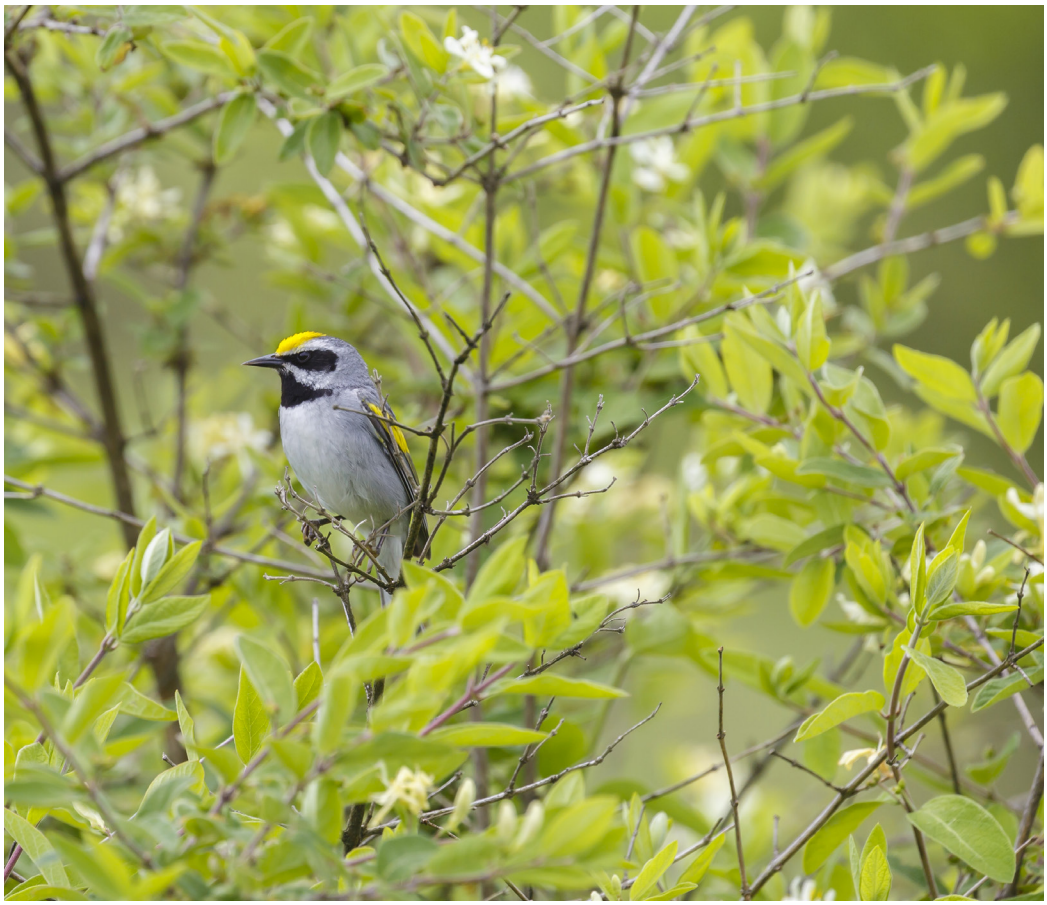
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Richard King Mellon Foundation
- Shell Oil Company



Golden-winged warbler

OVERVIEW

The Central Appalachia Habitat Stewardship Program was established in 2017 and through 2019 funded 35 projects to improve the quality and connectivity of forest and freshwater habitat in portions of the Appalachian region of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia.

In 2020 the Central Appalachia Habitat Stewardship Program is awarding $1.9 million to 12 new or continuing projects that will improve the quality and connectivity of forest and freshwater habitat and increase the distribution and abundance of fish, birds and other wildlife, as evidenced by a suite of species that collectively are indicators of forest and freshwater habitat condition.

The targeted forest species include cerulean warbler, golden-winged warbler and wood thrush, and the targeted aquatic species include eastern brook trout, eastern hellbender and a variety of native freshwater mussels. The 12 awards announced will be matched by over $3 million in match from the grantees, providing a total conservation impact of over $4.9 million.

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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 5,000 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of $6.1 billion.

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NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
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Implementing Automated Acoustic Monitoring in the Laurel Highlands and Pennsylvania Wilds (PA)
Grantee: University of Pittsburgh
Grant Amount: $198,748
Matching Funds: $204,538
Total Project Amount: $403,286
Monitor population responses of golden-winged warbler, cerulean warbler and wood thrush in four large forest blocks in the Laurel Highlands and Pennsylvania Wilds focal geographies that are being managed to create a diversity of habitats. Project will place automated acoustic recorders at 500 locations over 3,875 acres in three State Game Lands, and in Ohiopyle State Park, to collect an estimated 87,500 hours of observation, and develop a standardized monitoring protocol for future efforts.

Restoring Forest Age-Class and Structural Diversity in Two Forest Blocks in the Blue Ridge Focal Geography (VA)
Grantee: American Bird Conservancy
Grant Amount: $114,509
Matching Funds: $124,606
Total Project Amount: $239,115
Restore forest habitat age-class and structural diversity to benefit multiple focal bird species by implementing treatments on two large forest blocks in Bath and Rockbridge counties in Virginia. Project will engage consulting foresters to write comprehensive forest management plans for more than 5,000 acres of public and private forest, implement best management practices on at least 130 acres for golden-winged warbler, cerulean warbler and wood thrush and monitor population response of target species.

Improving Forest Management to Benefit Birds in the Upper Allegheny and Sinnemahoning Watersheds (NY, PA)
Grantee: National Audubon Society
Grant Amount: $197,389
Matching Funds: $198,000
Total Project Amount: $395,389
Scale up previous efforts in the Sinnemahoning and Upper Allegheny watersheds of Pennsylvania and New York to implement strategies that improve habitat in large forest blocks. Project will educate 1,500 landowners about forest management, connect Audubon-trained foresters with 20 of those landowners, provide financial assistance to loggers doing cost-prohibitive harvests and restore 500 acres of young and mature forest habitat for golden-winged warbler, cerulean warbler and wood thrush.

Testing New Methods to Engage Institutional Landowners in Sustainable Forestry in a Landscape Context (WV)
Grantee: Sustainable Forestry Initiative
Grant Amount: $199,856
Matching Funds: $304,553
Total Project Amount: $504,409
Develop and test effective means to engage certified institutional landowners and family landowners in West Virginia in implementation of dynamic forest block management that benefits forest bird species. Project will improve 7,650 acres of forest habitat, increase occupancy and abundance of golden winged warbler, cerulean warbler, and wood thrush on 20 sites and establish a path for institutional landowners to meet Sustainable Forestry Initiative landscape requirements for certification.

Brook trout

Implementing Forest Management Practices to Benefit Focal Bird Species in the Pennsylvania Wilds
Grantee: American Bird Conservancy
Grant Amount: $150,000
Matching Funds: $200,000
Total Project Amount: $350,000
Improve forest management within the Pennsylvania Wilds region where forest habitat health is limited by a lack of age class diversity and structural complexity. Project will deploy a variety of habitat treatments to create or enhance 577 acres of young forest habitat, 529 acres of mature forest habitat and 235 acres of late successional habitat to support the entire reproductive cycles of golden-winged warbler, cerulean warbler, and wood thrush.

Increasing Technical Assistance to Implement Management Plans that Improve Habitat on Private Forestland (PA)
Grantee: Ruffed Grouse Society
Grant Amount: $200,000
Matching Funds: $200,000
Total Project Amount: $400,000
Expand the availability of funding, technical support and coordination capacity for existing forest management plans to overcome barriers to sustainable forest management on public and private lands in the Laurel Highlands and Pennsylvania Wilds landscapes in Pennsylvania. Project will restore 484 acres of young forest habitat to benefit golden-winged

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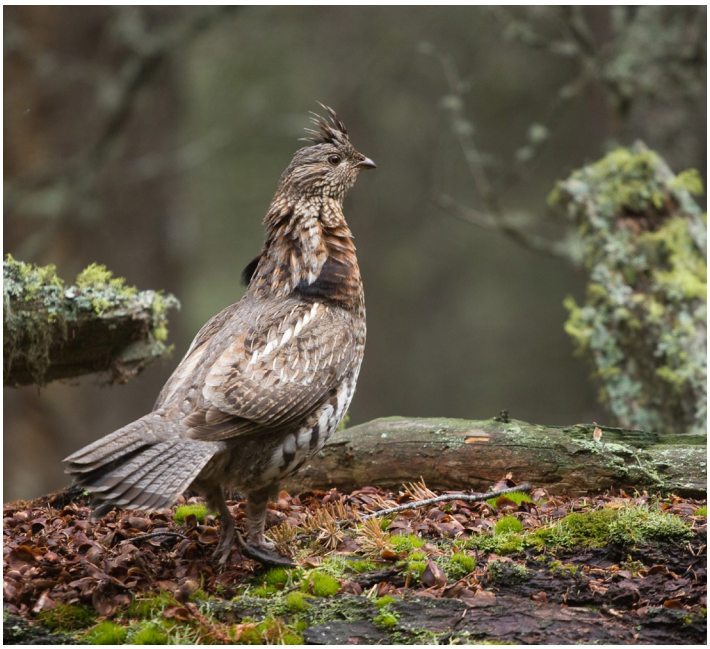
warbler and monitor 500 acres using autonomous recording units and point counts to document species response to best management practices.

Restoring Habitat for Native Brook Trout by Removing Barriers and Improving Instream Habitat (PA)
Grantee: Pennsylvania Game Commission
Grant Amount: $199,452
Matching Funds: $261,999
Total Project Amount: $461,451
Restore aquatic habitat for eastern brook trout on the Middle Fork of the East Branch of the Clarion River in Pennsylvania by removing barriers to aquatic organism passage, improving instream habitat through the addition of large wood and stabilizing stream banks and adjacent roadways. Project will replace seven barriers with bridge structures, remove two road-stream crossings and one relic jack dam and reconstruct the stream channel using Stream Simulation and Design methods.

Continuing Assessment of Pennsylvania Coldwater Streams to Determine the Presence of Native Brook Trout
Grantee: Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
Grant Amount: $63,423
Matching Funds: $97,136
Total Project Amount: $160,559
Coordinate the sampling of previously unassessed coldwater streams in Pennsylvania for the presence or absence of wild trout so the state can designate qualifying streams with a higher level of protection from development activities. Project will sample at least 1,000 streams across the state and analyze results to determine how many streams can be designated as Class A wild trout streams, the highest level of protection.

Reconnecting 40 Miles of Habitat for Key Trout Brook Populations in the Middle Youghigheny River (PA)
Grantee: Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
Grant Amount: $199,903
Matching Funds: $265,142
Total Project Amount: $465,045
Restore aquatic connectivity for native eastern brook trout by removing barriers to aquatic organism passage on Dunbar Creek and Ramcat Run, tributaries of the Youghigheny River in the Laurel Highlands of Pennsylvania. Project will remove three barriers to fish passage on two streams that will open up 40 miles of high quality historic habitat and will conduct 100 new culvert assessments.

Restoring Water Quality and Nesting Habitat for Eastern Hellbender in Middle Fork Holston River (VA)
Grantee: Evergreen SWCD
Grant Amount: $99,134
Matching Funds: $663,844
Total Project Amount: $762,978
Restore aquatic habitat for eastern hellbender and freshwater mussels and their host fish species by installing nesting rocks for hellbender, stabilizing the riverbank and enhancing riparian habitat on the Middle Fork of the Holston River in Southwest Virginia. Project will install 50 nesting rocks, stabilize two miles of riverbank to reduce erosion, restore 11 acres of riparian forest buffer and monitor nest box occupancy while refining the design to meet NRCS Conservation Practice standards.



Ruffed grouse

Removing a Barrier to Fish Passage on the Cheat River to Restore 75 Miles of Historic Habitat (WV)
Grantee: Friends of the Cheat
Grant Amount: $199,081
Matching Funds: $260,000
Total Project Amount: $459,081
Reconnect historic riverine habitat for eastern hellbender, eastern brook trout and freshwater mussels, and reduce sedimentation to improve water quality on the mainstem of the Cheat River in West Virginia. Project will remove one barrier to aquatic organism passage, restore access to more than 74 miles of stream and hundreds more miles of tributaries, and identify areas that are suitable for occupancy by hellbenders and eight species of freshwater mussel.

Improving Agricultural Soil Health and Water Quality for Eastern Hellbender and Freshwater Mussels (VA)
Grantee: Tazewell Soil and Water Conservation District
Grant Amount: $148,939
Matching Funds: $255,000
Total Project Amount: $403,939
Improve soil health and water quality for aquatic species including freshwater mussels, eastern brook trout and eastern hellbender by reducing bacteria and sediment runoff on the Holston and Clinch rivers in Tazewell County, Virginia. Project will engage agricultural producers in utilizing no-till seeders, increasing forage and biomass plantings, expanding cover crop use and installing livestock exclusion fencing on 600 acres of croplands and pasturelands.