

CLINCH RIVER VALLEY LAND CONSERVATION

STATE PROGRAM: Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

ASSISTANCE RECIPIENT: The Nature Conservancy

ASSISTANCE AMOUNT: \$20.1M



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Clinch River in Southwest Virginia is one of the most biodiverse river systems in North America. The river is also one of the last free-flowing tributaries of the Tennessee River system and provides vital habitat to support 20 federally listed mussel species and over 130 fish species. The Nature Conservancy received a \$20.1 million CWSRF loan from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality to implement the Clinch River Valley Land Conservation project, which will purchase and protect nearly 60,000 acres of land, including 47,000 acres of forest and over 112 miles of headwater streams that flow into the Clinch River. This project will protect drinking water sources, promote sustainable timber harvesting, and is part of a larger forest corridor that will ultimately protect over 254,000 acres of forestland. This stretch of land will provide a migratory path for wildlife that covers several important watersheds in the Appalachian Mountain range.

The Clinch River Land Conservation project supported by the CWSRF brings together multiple stakeholders and members of the community to work together for environmental and public health. In addition to protecting water quality in this economically depressed area, this project will improve the local economy by creating jobs in the sustainable forestry industry, expand the outdoor recreation sector, and allow continued access to ecotourism activities such as hunting, hiking, and biking.

To read more about this case study, please visit https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-02/documents/2020_pisces_compendium.pdf.