

## DECENTRALIZED WASTEWATER TREATMENT DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

**STATE PROGRAM:** West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection

**ASSISTANCE RECIPIENT:** Lincoln County Commission

**ASSISTANCE AMOUNT:** \$719,000



### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A decentralized wastewater treatment demonstration project in Lincoln County, West Virginia provides another example of the benefits of partnerships. In 2005, the Lincoln County Commission and West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection began a project funded by the U.S. EPA to demonstrate the water quality benefits of installing innovative decentralized wastewater systems for homes where current septic systems were failing or nonexistent. The success of the initial phase of this project led Lincoln County to apply for further funding under the ARRA GPR. The county was awarded a \$719,000 principal forgiveness loan for 19 additional systems in the Left Fork Watershed. This demonstration project is an excellent example of a true community effort.

In addition to a large amount of community involvement, including dozens of meetings to ensure transparency, partnerships were formed that helped to maximize knowledge gained from the project. For example, ecology classes in Lincoln County schools participated in water quality testing. University partnerships also proved critical. The biotechnology department at Marshall University assisted the Lincoln County Commission in water quality testing, which determined that E. coli in the watershed was the result of human contamination. West Virginia University also was able to provide support to water testing efforts, as well as institutional knowledge related to water treatment. The results of the water quality tests performed by these university partners were used to measure the impact of the installation of new onsite systems for participating homes. This information contributed to fact sheets and other materials that will be used to showcase its benefits to the Left Fork community and beyond.

To read more about this case study, please visit [https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-04/documents/decentralized\\_systems-developing\\_partnerships.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-04/documents/decentralized_systems-developing_partnerships.pdf).