PA COUNCIL OF TROUT UNLIMITED
POLICY ON SURFACE MINING & MINE RECLAMATION
(Coal & Non-Coal)
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The water resources of Pennsylvania are essential to sustain aquatic life, wildlife, human health, enterprise and recreation. Over the years, mining has caused major damage to the waters of the Commonwealth. This includes over 2,500 miles of streams polluted by abandoned mine drainage (AMD). Our legacy from well over 100 years of mining activity is many miles of mine drainage polluted surface waters that support little or no aquatic life and numerous polluted aquifers. This polluted water costs the citizens of Pennsylvania millions of dollars for home water treatment and lost revenue from tourism. It also discourages development because many areas have no usable water without costly treatment. Many of these discharges can be treated and the watersheds restored.

Mining of coal and other mineral resources is an important aspect of the economy of the Commonwealth but it must not occur at the expense of healthy coldwater resources. Therefore, PA Trout supports the following:

1. No further degradation of the Commonwealth's water resources from mining should occur.
2. Mining should be prohibited in certain watersheds.
3. Regulatory agencies should use the best and latest technology for predicting and safeguarding against post-mining threats to water quality; including acid mine drainage, erosion, sedimentation, thermal impacts and loss of surface and ground waters.
4. All regulatory agency offices must be consistent in the strict application of criteria for evaluating mine permit applications and monitoring the performance of mine operators.
5. Mining operations should be rigorously monitored and enforced for regulatory compliance.
6. Bonding levels must be adequate to ensure treatment of any discharges that may threaten future water quality in the event of non-compliance or company bankruptcy.
7. If an unexpected discharge should occur on a mine site, remediation measures should be immediately taken to reduce the impact of the discharge.
8. Soil additives and amendments are often used to address acidic mine discharges and acidic overburden. These include coal combustion wastes, biosolids from sewage or industrial processes, incinerator ash, and harbor dredgings. The public must have the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process concerning the use of these materials. Long term monitoring should ensure that the amendments pose no water quality threats.
9. AMD discharges should be addressed on a watershed basis and should employ multiple partnerships to assist in the restoration of these watersheds.
10. Development of additional sources of permanent financing for construction, operation and maintenance of existing and future treatment systems and for other activities necessary for watershed restoration.