



# Eastern Coal Regional Roundtable

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## Mission Statement

*The Eastern Coal Regional Roundtable serves mine scarred coal country watersheds through training, capacity building and providing a collective voice for underserved communities seeking to restore the well being of their citizens and environment.*

## Staff

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*Executive Director*

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To: The Energy and Water Subcommittee, House Appropriations

June 15, 2009

An oversight in appropriations bills for FY 09 and FY 10 has seriously compromised the Watershed Cooperative Agreement Program (WCAP). The WCAP is a funding program made available through the federal Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation Enforcement. WCAP provides crucial matching funds for abatement projects which combat Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) in thousands of miles of polluted streams throughout the coal regions. Local grassroots organizations known mostly as watershed groups have depended greatly on combinations of funds to implement AMD abatement projects, with WCAP often making the difference in a project proceeding to implementation. WCAP's effectiveness is now limited by restrictions caused by what we understand was the inadvertent removal of crucial legislative language that other wise allowed WCAP funding to be used as match against other federal dollars, for instance EPA's 319 program. That same situation is set to occur again for the FY10 unless action is taken.

An explicit exception in past annual Federal Appropriations Bills has for many years allowed WCAP funds to be used as matches to other federal grants programs for cleaning up AMD polluted waters. **If WCAP funds are not able to be used as they previously were, most local grassroots organizations will be unable to utilize other federal funds and will effectively be shut out of many funding opportunities that would otherwise be available.**

Fortunately this situation has a simple remedy. The insertion of the following text in the FY 10 Appropriations Bill will re-enable WCAP to be used as was originally intended:

*Provided further, That funds made available under title IV of Public Law 95-87 may be used for any required non-Federal share of the cost of projects funded by the Federal Government for the purpose of environmental restoration related to treatment or abatement of acid mine drainage from abandoned mines: Provided further, That such projects must be consistent with the purposes and priorities of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act.*

Having this language inserted into the FY 10 Appropriations Bill (and future Appropriations Bills) will ensure that grassroots watershed groups can continue to make effective use of funding sources to clean up streams impacted by AMD.

As a result of increased capacity of watershed groups in the last two years, more non-profit organizations today are looking to use WCAP funds—making the need greater than the last fiscal appropriation. Thus we ask that this year's appropriation to WCAP be \$2 million.

Your support for this language to be inserted into the bill is appreciated and urgently needed.

Respectfully,

Dvon Duncan, Executive Director