

Contact Information:

Leigh Lindstrom, Communications Coordinator, Pinchot Institute for Conservation:
202.797.6582; LLindstrom@pinchot.org

Stephanie Pendergrass, Research Fellow, Pinchot Institute for Conservation:
202.797.6530; spendergrass@pinchot.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**New Fund Launched To Support Landowner Conservation Practices
Grants Available For Actions That Protect Forests & Drinking Water
Quality**

February 14, 2011 Milford PA - A new million-dollar grant program for private landowners in the upper Delaware River Basin to implement watershed forestry practices was launched today at www.commonwatersfund.org. Forest owners in three states will be eligible to receive financial assistance for implementing sustainable forest management projects on their property.

“Ensuring healthy forests in the Upper Delaware Watershed is critical to maintaining quality drinking water for 15 million water users,” said Carol Collier, Chair of the Pinchot Institute for Conservation, which administers the program. “We want to support landowners in these priority areas as they take important steps to maintain their forests over the long term.”

The Common Waters Fund will provide incentives to qualifying landowners to implement forest stewardship plans, watershed forestry management practices, and/or conservation easements over the next two years. The first quarterly deadline for applying is May 2nd and the first grants will be made in June. The initial financing for the Fund comes from the United States Endowment for Forestry and Communities. The Common Waters Fund is one of several pilot programs they are supporting, with the aim of linking “forest and faucets” around the country. In the future the Fund hopes to attract more investors interested in protecting sources of drinking water.

“Development, fragmentation, and other issues threaten the health of our forests as well as the infrastructure functions that they provide. More than 180 million Americans get their drinking water from forests,” said Carlton Owen, President and CEO of the Endowment. “Finding ways to incent private landowners to care for their forests today will help protect source water for years to come.”

Grants up to \$25,000 will be available for eligible landowners, qualified land trusts and timber harvesting operators for the following:

- Forest Stewardship Plans - Forest owners can apply for funds to have a forester write a new or upgraded forest stewardship plan for their property.
- Forest Management Practices - Landowners can apply for funds to offset the costs of implementing certain forest management practices that will improve forest health and protect water quality.

- Conservation Easements - The Common Waters Fund will provide financial assistance to qualified 501(C)3 land trusts to assist with expenses related to placing a conservation easement on a property.
- Timber Bridges - Logging operators can apply for funds to defray the cost of construction, purchase, or rental of portable timber/skid bridges to minimize erosion and sedimentation on streams in priority areas.

“This is a terrific opportunity for landowners who care about the health of their forest,” said Sue Currier, Executive Director of the Delaware Highlands Conservancy, a partner in the Common Waters initiative. “We are looking for landowners who have always wanted to do right by their forests but couldn't afford the upfront investment.”

Interested landowners should visit the web site, www.commonwatersfund.org, to learn more about eligibility and program requirements and to download an application. They are also urged to contact their County Coordinator listed below for help with their application. More than two dozen partner organizations are part of the Common Waters initiative, including the Delaware River Basin Commission, county conservation districts and planning departments, the National Park Service, and state forestry agencies. A full list can be found at www.commonwatersfund.org.

Regional and County Coordinators for the Common Waters Fund

New Jersey

Sussex County Soil Conservation District
<http://home.earthlink.net/~sussexscd2/>
 Clifford Lundin, 973-579-5074
sussex@sussexscd.org

Warren County Soil Conservation District
www.warrencountyscd.org
 Tim Matthews, 908-852-2579
tmscd@verizon.net

New York

Catskill Forest Association
www.catskillforest.org
 Ryan Trapani, 845-586-3054
rtrapani@catskill.net

Sullivan County Soil & Water Conservation District
www.sullivancountyswcd.com
 Brian Brustman, 845-292-6552
brianbrustman@liberty.twcbc.com

Pennsylvania

Pike County Conservation District

www.pikeconservation.org
Susan Beecher, 570-226-8220
sbeecher@pikepa.org

Wayne Conservation District
www.wayneconservation.org
Paul Reining, 570-253-0930
preining@co.wayne.pa.us

Monroe County Conservation District
www.mcconservation.org
Victor Motts, 570-629-3060
vmmccd@ptd.net

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About the Pinchot Institute for Conservation

The mission of the Pinchot Institute for Conservation (<http://www.pinchot.org>) is to advance conservation and sustainable natural resource management by developing innovative, practical, and broadly-supported solutions to conservation challenges and opportunities. The Pinchot Institute accomplishes this through nonpartisan research, education and technical assistance on key issues influencing the future of conservation and sustainable natural resource development.