



Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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Division of Mine Permits Unveils Online Watershed Data *Federal funding of \$452,425 provides public access to CHIA data*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Jan. 27, 2011) – The Department for Natural Resources' Division of Mine Permits announced today a new online service that gives public access to vital watershed data, which may include surface water quality, benthic information, groundwater quality, water quality violations, pollutant discharge elimination information, maps, mine history and information regarding pending mines.

The files are packaged and organized by the watershed's Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC), which is used to uniquely identify the watershed. Each of these "characterization" data packages contain between 25 and 35 files. In addition, each package is equipped with a Water Quality Results Viewer designed to enable individuals to view, filter, sort, graph and export groundwater and surface water quality data.

The development culminates a year-long effort by the department to streamline and improve the procedures regarding a Cumulative Hydrologic Impact Assessment (CHIA). An environmental scientist for DNR, Dr. Richard Wahrer secured the original funding of \$327,888 from the federal Office of Surface Mining (OSM).

Additionally, DNR has been awarded two grants from EPA: \$50,000 to purchase sampling equipment for the watershed assessments; and, \$74,537 for the advancement and implementation of a GIS-based coal mining database that will supplement the national GeoMine program. The GeoMine program will provide a collaborative vehicle to share coal-mining data including coal permit boundaries, critical watershed features, federally listed species and the status and success of land reclamation. This program will ensure transparency in regulatory decisions among our partners, e.g., the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers (COE) and other federal/state regulatory agencies.

With these federal grants, DNR is now in receipt of \$452,425 to supplement their water resources and mapping programs.

Carl Campbell, DNR commissioner expressed his appreciation to both federal agencies. "They have been great partners in promoting this cutting-edge technology. The funding from OSM and EPA was critical in allowing us to develop this valuable online resource. Over the years, OSM's commitment to this department has given us the opportunity to provide the latest technical and geographical tools to ensure protection of coal field residents and their environment."

The data packages are available at <http://minepermits.ky.gov/Pages/CHIA.aspx>.

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