



OSM/VISTA Cheat River, WV

[Home Page](#)[Directory](#)[Index](#)[Search](#)[Site Map](#)[Help](#)

Friends of the Cheat, Inc. (FOC) is a nonprofit watershed association in north central West Virginia with a special focus on the lower portion of the Cheat Watershed. The Cheat River traverses the central portion of the state, flowing northward from the Monongahela National Forest to Cheat Lake in Monongalia County. The lower 25 miles of the watershed are primarily in Preston County. This section is impacted by acid mine drainage (AMD) and this is the principal focus of our work.

Our mission statement is to “restore, protect and promote the outstanding natural qualities of the Cheat Watershed.” We also chair the River of Promise, which is “a cooperative effort by state and federal agencies, private industry, academia, grassroots organizations and local landowners to address the severe AMD problems in the lower watershed.”



The OSM/VISTA volunteer works primarily with community outreach and education, as well as grant-writing to support our projects, attends River of Promise meetings and assists with newsletter development. During the past two years VISTA volunteers Meredith Pavlick and Sally Wilts and our OSM 2002 intern Laura Fletcher worked to

complete a River of Promise Interpretive Trail about AMD. This is a self-guided driving tour consisting of ten illustrative panels covering historical stream use, what is in a healthy stream, what is AMD, the cause of AMD and what can be done to treat it, and recreational use of streams and the river.

VISTA Meredith Pavlick received an EPA environmental education award to develop a curriculum for elementary school children about acid mine drainage. VISTA Sally Wilts worked with WVDEP/Project Wet and a local teacher to develop this ten session module, which includes a tour of AMD treatment sites and the River of Promise Interpretive Trail.

FOC started a stream monitoring program that includes 16 community volunteers and is supported by a WVDEP Stream Partners grant and an Environmental Challenge

grant from NiSource written by OSM/VISTA Sally Wilts. After training and certification from Tim Craddock of WVDEP Save Our Streams program, we are committed to monitoring 22 sites four times per year. The participation by the volunteers greatly increases understanding and concern for improved water quality.

Each year FOC VISTAs organize clean ups of illegal dumping sites, as well as cleaning up our adopted stretch of highway, which parallels Muddy Creek and the River of Promise Interpretive Trail. The OSM/VISTA contributes to "Into the Canyon," the quarterly newsletter of the organization.

The OSM/VISTA volunteer helps to organize the Cheat River Festival which serves as a celebration of the river, our major fund-raiser and our biggest educational outreach effort.

Contact Information

Name: Ben Mack, OSM/VISTA
Location: Friends of the Cheat
Address: 119 S. Price St, Kingwood, WV 26527
Phone: (304) 329-3621
E-mail: bmack@cheat.org
Website: www.cheat.org

To learn more about the OSM/VISTA program contact:
T. Allan Comp, PhD
(202)208-2836, Tcomp@osmre.gov