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For Immediate Release

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Washington D.C. - Congressman John P. Murtha, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, announced today that the Loyalhanna Watershed Association, Westmoreland County, has received a \$90,000 grant through the USDA Rural Development for the Crabtree Concept Project.

In early 2002, the Loyalhanna Watershed Association and Western Pennsylvania Conservancy began an assessment and restoration plan for the Loyalhanna Creek Watershed. The plan recognized the Crabtree Creek sub-watershed as the single largest pollution source to the Loyalhanna Creek Watershed. Pollution sources to the watershed include sewage, abandoned mine drainage (AMD), agricultural waste, and some stream encroachment and urbanization.

The Crabtree Coalition was formed between local environmental advocacy groups and community members. The Coalition is proposing a multi-faceted project which includes a new wastewater treatment plant, and a comprehensive approach to addressing an average 4,000 gallon per minute net alkaline abandoned mine drainage discharge, a municipal sewage project to address the raw sewage discharges and malfunctioning on-lot systems, and farmland animal waste removal and odor reduction from several nearby agricultural operations.

Further plans call for a rails-to-trails system and a biogas production plant. This funding will enable the Loyalhanna Watershed Association to conduct a feasibility study and business plan on the Crabtree Concept Project.