Archey Fork
Restoration Project

Clinton, Arkansas, is located at the confluence of the Archey Fork River and the South Fork of the Little Red River, both of which are home to a federally-endangered fish – the yellowcheek darter. In 1982, downtown Clinton flooded to a depth of nine feet and was declared a disaster area. To address future flooding concerns, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers channelized and dredged an approximately three-mile stretch of the Archey Fork near Clinton. The channel was bulldozed and widened to approximately 800 feet, from its natural width of 80 feet. Previously, the yellowcheek darter traveled between the Archey Fork and South Fork, but the flood-control project effectively eliminated the aquatic habitat through which the fish traveled from one river to the other, thereby isolating the yellowcheek darter into two populations.

The SWN-funded conservation project completed in January 2015, reconnects the South Fork and Archey Fork populations of the yellowcheek darter by restoring the river's channel in a way that provides adequate habitat for the fish to swim between the two rivers. The project, designed by The Nature Conservancy, involves the use of natural channel design with the addition of meanders, riffles and pools, all while maintaining the flood capacity of the previously dredged channel. The project also reduces the negative impact of increased sediment entering the river and the downstream reservoir, a source of drinking water for approximately 250,000 people in central Arkansas. The project also benefits the community by allowing for increased recreational use of the restored waterway.

Why invest in water conservation?

According to the World Economic Forum, water security is one of the fast-growing social, political and economic challenges we face today. Analysis suggests the world will experience a 40 percent global shortfall between forecast demand and available supply of water by 2030. Challenges are multiplied in watersheds where many users compete for shrinking clean water supplies, which can negatively impact businesses' social license to operate.

Most efforts are focused on water use efficiency and monitoring. However, improving water use efficiency will only close the global supply-demand gap by approximately 20 percent by 2025. (Charting Our Water Future – Economic frameworks to inform decision making. 2009)

There is also a need for investment in natural infrastructure projects that help address supply disruptions. Projects that promote healthy watersheds also provide extra benefits like habitat protection and carbon sequestration.

Partners

Arkansas Canoe Club
Arkansas Public Policy Panel
US Fish and Wildlife Service
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
City of Clinton
The Nature Conservancy

At SWN, we understand the importance of water to local communities, the environment and the economy. That is why we are developing operational practices and programs to protect and conserve this most precious resource. We are proud to partner with state agencies, local communities and respected non-profit conservation organizations to enhance water quality and develop conservation projects to improve local watersheds.

For more information, visit SWN.com.
Send inquiries to media@swn.com or call (832) 796-1000.

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