

## **The Kettle Creek Home Rivers Initiative – A Brief History of Its Staff**

The Kettle Creek Watershed Association (KCWA) formed in 1997 under the visionary leadership of James Dubisz from Coudersport, who served as the KCWA President until 1999 when he stepped down and John Larson, a resident of the Kettle Creek valley became President. James Dubisz, as a member of the God's Country Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TU) and on behalf of the KCWA, contacted the national office of Trout Unlimited and proposed that Kettle Creek be accepted as one of its national Home Rivers Initiative projects. Impressed by the commitment of the KCWA, the overwhelming support from Trout Unlimited Chapters throughout Pennsylvania, and the possibilities for improving coldwater fisheries and overall watershed restoration in the Kettle Creek watershed, TU announced Kettle Creek as its third national Home Rivers Initiative in November of 1998.

Through grants awarded to both the KCWA and TU, two full-time project coordinators – Amy (Gottesfeld) Wolfe and James Sheridan – were hired in May 1999 on a temporary contract basis through TU to work with the KCWA. Amy Wolfe had earned her Bachelor of Science in Environmental Biology and Ecology at Lock Haven University, but also had a background from seasonal employment with the DEP, the PFBC, and the Maryland Biological Stream Survey, as well as involvement with graduate level research on abandoned mine drainage through the Appalachian Laboratory of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. James (Jamie) Sheridan was a recent graduate from Mansfield University with a Bachelor of Science in Geography. Grants also provided the funding for two summer field interns in 1999 – students Rebecca Dunlap from Mansfield University and Greg Miller from Lock Haven University – in addition to the two summer field interns provided as in-kind services by the DEP Northcentral Regional Office – Eric Beaver and Jaimie Ruane, both students at Mansfield University. TU did not continue its contract with James Sheridan after the first three months, but Amy Wolfe continued as the Kettle Creek Project Coordinator via a contract with TU until April 2000 when TU took her aboard as full-time salaried staff as the Kettle Creek Watershed Director, a position she maintained until the completion of the Cross Fork Creek brook trout habitat project in 2007. Amy remains actively involved with leading the abandoned mine drainage cleanup projects in the lower Kettle Creek watershed through her position and responsibilities as Director of TU's Eastern Abandoned Mine Program.

In October 2001, TU contracted the services of Neil Wolfe as the Kettle Creek Field Coordinator, a student at Lock Haven University who had just completed an internship with the DEP Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation. Neil maintained this contract position, upon graduating from Lock Haven University with a Bachelor of Science in Geology, until February 2003. In August 2004, TU hired Amidea Daniel (who had previously been the Clinton County Conservation District Watershed Specialist), who had a Bachelor of Science in Recreation Management from Lock Haven University, as the full-time Kettle Creek Project Coordinator and Amidea maintained the position until August 2006.

During the nearly nine years of the Kettle Creek Home Rivers Initiative, just over \$3.1 million dollars was secured in grant awards for comprehensive, scientific assessments and restoration plans; fish habitat improvement projects; riparian planting projects; abandoned mine drainage abatement projects; and landowner stewardship education projects. More than \$1.5 million was leveraged by TU and KCWA for project work.