

April Partner Spotlight

Canaan Valley Institute (CVI) was formed in 1995 under the sponsorship of U.S. Congressman Alan B. Mollohan. CVI understands the value of clean water to its communities and uses its staffs' expertise to protect this resource for their region. Gillian Bee visited with Drew Langston to learn more about the organization. Thanks for sitting at the table with us, CVI!



Canaan Valley Institute

What part of our freshwater aquatic ecosystem do you really admire?

I really marvel at the interdependency of stream corridor ecosystems. The riparian assemblage affects the stability of the streambanks, the stability of the streambank affects the quality of the water and habitat to produce an aquatic trophic structure. The aquatic trophic structure bleeds into terrestrial trophic structures giving the entire stream corridor a dynamic interdependency. The paralleled complexity and simplicity of aquatic habitats are extremely fascinating to me.

What is your role with Canaan Valley Institute?

I work as a Project Manager for CVI. I help lead the CVI team in Southwest Virginia. We work very closely with the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and have gained so much through our partnership with them.

What is the mission of Canaan Valley Institute?

CVI believes wholeheartedly that Clean Water produces Stronger Communities. Our organization has a rich history of restoring aquatic ecosystems for the sake of enhancing the livelihood of the individuals and communities that depend upon the resource. Our mission is to continue to steward our natural resources well and link arms with others in that process.

How did your organization come about?

Our organization was created in 1995 under the sponsorship of U.S. Congressman Alan B. Mollohan to assist communities throughout the Mid-Atlantic Highlands in their efforts to identify issues and implement locally determined solutions. Since then we have provided assistance to over 400 groups in a four state area, including West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia.

How can people get involved or connected with CVI? What type of assistance could they provide to you?

The best way to keep up with CVI is through our [Facebook](#) page and [website](#). CVI hosts events such as stream cleanups, educational outreach events, and has ample opportunity for volunteers. We are always willing to provide opportunities for the public to engage in conservation. CVI is a 501c3 Non-Profit organization and we accept charitable contributions through our website that goes directly towards the conservation of our natural resources.

What has been your favorite project?

My favorite project has been one in the Clinch River Headwaters; We worked with a fantastic landowner and partners to enhance headwater tributaries through the establishment of riparian corridors. The landowner farms the property and the project is a prime example of how working lands and conservation can work in favor of all parties involved.

What has been your proudest moment for your organization?

Partnering with local conservation stakeholders throughout the Upper Tennessee River Basin. We have seen how we are able to leverage grant and cooperative agreement funds with local NRCS offices and Soil and Water Conservation Districts to increase conservation efforts in priority areas. These partnerships have become vital to how we operate and we are seeing tremendous fruit from these relationships.

Anything special happening this year?

We are hoping to schedule a couple showings of the Hidden Rivers Film in Southwest Virginia and we have several exciting projects we will be implementing towards the end of the summer.

How did you hear about the Tennessee River Basin Network?

USFWS Partners Biologist Corey Kanuckel

Why do you participate in the Tennessee River Basin Network?

Being a part of a coalition with such a diversity of stakeholders helps us to be more strategic in how we implement conservation throughout the basin. We want to make every effort to understand how we can work towards a unified goal of protecting and conserving the natural resources throughout the basin and the TRBN provides that outlet for us.

How could CVI support others in our Network?

CVI really has a finger on the pulse on many of the needs and priority areas for restoration within the upper part of the Tennessee basin. We can help provide outlets for accomplishing restoration, provide local knowledge within our service area, and assist with technical assistance on restoration projects.