Scranton & The Effects of Coal Mining

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The Lackawanna County Coal Mines opened in and around the greater Scranton area in the late 1870's. The mines closed in 1966. In the 1980's, the Lackawanna river was tested and had high amounts of arsenic, copper, and lead, causing highly acidic water.

In 2013 there was a $1 million fund allocated to help remove toxins in the water. The cause of this pollution is due to mine drainages in its watershed. In 2013 an estimated 10,000 fish washed up dead on the shores of Lake Ariel. Crews determined the cause was water too acidic to sustain some marine life.

It's not just the Lackawanna River feeling the effects of mining. In 2013 an estimated 10,000 fish washed up dead on the shores of Lake Ariel. Lakes Wallenpaupack, Winola, and Sheridan all have had their share of similar incidents. The acidity of the water leads to a lack of natural food sources for the fish. The recreational effects: kills wildlife for fishing, kayaking and rafting, as well as swimming.

A 2015 study found it was the largest point source pollution into the Chesapeake bay. Everyday, and estimated 60 million gallons of mine waste enter the river.

Sources: