

- West Virginia School Districts and Counties receive approximately \$2.9 million in annual funding from SRSCA
- 13 rural counties and over 111 public schools in West Virginia receive annual funding from SRSCA
- Reauthorization of SRSCA is a priority for rural communities

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# The Reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools & Community Self-Determination Act (*County Payments*)

THE PARTNERSHIP FOR RURAL  
AMERICA CAMPAIGN

2010

## Overview of the Secure Rural Schools & Community Self-Determination Act (SRSCA)

The Secure Rural Schools & Community Self-Determination Act is a contract providing assistance to rural counties and school districts affected by the decline in revenue from timber harvests on federal lands.

Historically, rural counties have relied on a share of receipts from timber harvests to supplement local funding for education

services and roads. The steep decline in federal timber sales decreased the revenues that rural counties and school districts received from these timber sales.

In response, Congress passed the "Secure Rural Schools & Community Self-Determination Act" to stabilize the payments to counties and to compensate for lost revenues.

In 2010, SRSCA will provide approximately \$405 million in funding to 729 rural counties and parishes across the United States.

Reauthorization of SRSCA is critical for resource constrained rural West Virginia counties, schools and communities.



Monongahela National Forest—WV

## SRSCA Funding to West Virginia

- In 2008, West Virginia school districts and counties received \$2.9 million in funding from SRSCA
- From 2008 to 2011, rural West Virginia is projected to receive \$9.8 million in SRSCA Funding
- SRSCA funding to West Virginia will decline by 403% from \$2.9 million in 2008 to \$568,233 in 2012—a loss of \$2.3 million



## About the Partnership for Rural America Campaign

**Take an Active Role Now: Join the SRSCA Reauthorization Effort in West Virginia**

*West Virginia Counties affected by the Act should take a leading role in the reauthorization Campaign.*

Participate in the Campaign and the grass roots efforts by becoming a member of a Regional Coalition Action Team.

**Sign up on our website or contact: Joel Yelverton, Marc Kelley, or Carolyn Wasem at (877) 778-7252.**

### Our Goal:

To renew the contract between the Federal government and rural communities through a long-term (ten-year) reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (County Revenue Sharing Programs).

### Our Purpose:

The purpose of the Partnership for Rural America is to promote the economic and social health of rural America by actively building a broad-based partnership to support the long-term reauthorization and appropriation of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act.

The Partnership for Rural America Campaign provides interactive maps of state and county level SRSCS payments on our website.

Link to our website to find additional information on the history of SRSCA and additional information about funding for your county or state, or **sign up to be a volunteer to support our activities on behalf of West Virginia.**

<http://www.partnershipforruralamerica.org>

### Our Partnership with the National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition

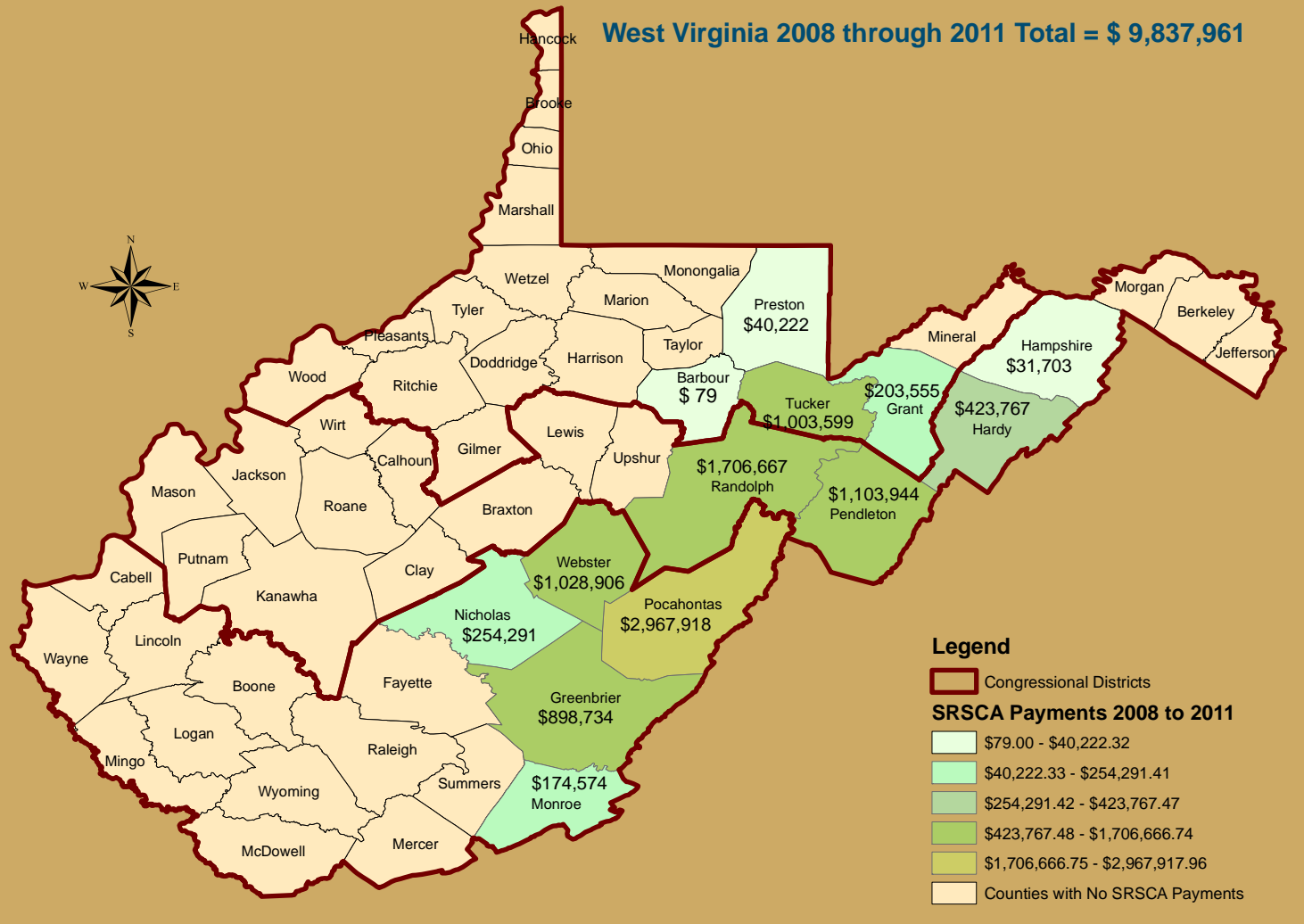
A nationwide Partnership for Rural America Campaign was initiated by the National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition in 2009. The Partnership for Rural America Campaign works together with the National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition to provide support for the reauthorization of funding for SRSCA. The mission of the National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition is to actively initiate, coordinate, and monitor activities regarding the multiple use management of public and private lands that affect their health, productivity, and sustainability; these activities also impact the economic and social vitality of forest and rural county communities, families, schools, and local governments.

Activities of the National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition may include, but are not limited to:

- Monitoring and supporting full implementation of the counties and schools safety net legislation. Actively engaging with those activities which support and enhance the implementation of the legislation.
- Monitoring and engaging in development of policy, regulations, and legislation.
- Initiating and coordinating communications, media outreach, education, and public relations programs.
- Collaborating with other organizations in monitoring and supporting key legislation.

Secure Rural Schools & Community Self-determination Act Total Funding to Counties  
2008 through 2011

West Virginia 2008 through 2011 Total = \$ 9,837,961



There are 20 communities in West Virginia that have earned recognition as National Firewise Communities. In 2003, the Coolfront Mountain-side Association was the first recognized Firewise Communities/USA site in West Virginia. Payments from the Secure Rural Schools & Community Self-Determination Act fund these activities.



Berkeley Springs Volunteer Fire Department  
Firewise Demonstration

## SRSCA Payments to West Virginia 2008 through 2012 by County

County	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	Total 2008 - 2011	FY 2012 <i>estimated</i>	Decrease 2008 compared to 2012
Barbour	\$23	\$21	\$19	\$17	\$79	\$6	-16.42
Grant	\$59,190	\$53,271	\$47,944	\$43,150	\$203,555	\$11,697	-47,492.78
Greenbrier	\$261,336	\$235,202	\$211,682	\$190,514	\$898,734	\$61,804	-199,532.28
Hampshire	\$9,219	\$8,297	\$7,467	\$6,721	\$31,703	\$991	-8,227.60
Hardy	\$123,224	\$110,902	\$99,811	\$89,830	\$423,767	\$14,665	-108,559.53
Monroe	\$50,763	\$45,687	\$41,118	\$37,006	\$174,574	\$3,343	-47,420.23
Nicholas	\$73,943	\$66,549	\$59,894	\$53,905	\$254,291	\$13,767	-60,176.41
Pendleton	\$321,007	\$288,907	\$260,016	\$234,014	\$1,103,944	\$61,655	-259,352.17
Pocahontas	\$863,018	\$776,716	\$699,044	\$629,140	\$2,967,918	\$181,156	-681,861.75
Preston	\$11,696	\$10,526	\$9,474	\$8,526	\$40,222	\$2,279	-9,416.83
Randolph	\$496,268	\$446,641	\$401,977	\$361,780	\$1,706,667	\$119,081	-377,187.68
Tucker	\$291,829	\$262,646	\$236,381	\$212,743	\$1,003,599	\$59,307	-232,521.82
Webster	\$299,188	\$269,269	\$242,342	\$218,108	\$1,028,906	\$38,482	-260,705.55
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,860,704</b>	<b>\$2,574,634</b>	<b>\$2,317,169</b>	<b>\$2,085,454</b>	<b>\$9,837,961</b>	<b>\$568,233</b>	<b>-2,292,471</b>

### The Need for SRSCA Funding in the Pocahontas County School District

The Pocahontas County School District enrolls approximately 1,205 students. “The *school district is a very large rural county with some of the highest and most rugged terrain in the state,*” according to Dr. J. Patrick Law, Pocahontas County Schools Superintendent, “*with an average of 1.2 students per square mile, long bus routes require us to hire more bus operators than counties with similar populations.*” Dr. Law explains that “*because our schools are isolated from each other, classroom size inefficiencies are created. For example, one of our schools has a 3rd grade class of only 7 students. Another elementary school has two classes per grade but exceeds the state’s maximum allowed student-per-classroom by one or two students in each grade level. This requires us to hire an additional teacher for each grade. Yet we cannot consolidate and our attempts to pass local levies have historically met with very low support.*” In Pocahontas County about 58 percent of the county’s land area is occupied by state and national forests, parks, and trails; this state and federally owned land does not generate property tax revenues to support the Pocahontas County School District. Superintendent J. Patrick Law expresses the importance of SRSCA funding for education in Pocahontas County “*we face many unique challenges in providing the education that children deserve. We ask that you support the reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act.*”

## The History of SRSCA Legislation



Dolly Sods Wilderness — Photo by Ray Bulson

President Teddy Roosevelt developed and implemented the policy of conserving lands for multi-use. He also understood the economic challenges that this placed on rural communities. To

address this challenge, he established a revenue sharing plan specifying 25% of all revenues from National Forests would be returned to forested counties. This law worked for nearly a century. However, in the 1980s national resource policies substantially diminished the revenue-generating activity in the forests. In 2000 the *Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act* (P.L. 106-393) was enacted. The goal of the Act was to provide assistance to rural counties and schools affected by declining revenues from timber harvests on federal lands.

*“These funds are used for schools and roads,*

*to create employment opportunities, to maintain current infrastructure, and to improve the health of watershed and ecosystems”* (USDA Forest Service Release No. 0814, October 8, 2008).

On October 3, 2008, the *Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act* (P.L. 110-343) was enacted; it reauthorized and amended SRSCA 2000 to continue, on a sliding payment scale, through 2011.

**Efforts to assure that SRSCA is reauthorized are underway today.**

## Reauthorization of SRSCA

In West Virginia, rural counties must fund education and maintain roads on a tax base that is constrained by high child poverty rates, a limited business tax base, and a property tax base that is restricted by the tax-exempt status of national forest land within their boundaries. Secure, reliable payments from SRSCA are an essential source of revenues that enable rural counties to meet their financial obligations.

**The *Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act* will expire in 2011.** The reauthorization of SRSCA will ensure that students receive essential educational services and that rural communities have funding for roads, conservation projects, Search and Rescue missions, (a safety struc-

ture for residents and visitors) and fire prevention programs. Funding from SRSCA also provides necessary revenue to cash-strapped rural school districts. It is important for Congress to commit the resources necessary to ensure that rural communities do not have to make further cuts to children’s education or further reduce vital services.

In 2009, counties and school districts began seeking support for the reauthorization of SRSCA to secure this important source of revenue for all rural counties and school districts.



Seneca Rocks—Monongahela National Forest WV

## A Picture of Rural School Districts that Receive SRSCA Funding

There are approximately 35,588 children enrolled in West Virginia schools in the counties that received SRSCA funding in 2009; the poverty rate among these children was 57.43% (Source; West Virginia Department of Education *Free and Reduced Lunch Statistics*). With a poverty rate of 72%, schools in Webster County (Congressional District 3) have the 2nd highest poverty rate in the state; Webster County will receive approximately \$1,028,906 in SRSCA payments from 2008 through 2011—if SRSCA is not reauthorized these payments will drop to approximately \$38,482 annually after 2011. In 2009, the poverty rate among children enrolled in school districts in Pendleton County was 57% (Congressional District 2); in 2009, Pendleton County received \$288,907 in SRSCA funding. In Tucker County (Congressional District 1), approximately 58% of the children enrolled in school live in poverty—in 2010, Scott County will receive \$236,381 in SRSCA funding. In 2008, the Pocahontas County received \$863,018 in SRSCA funding, this represented approximately 7 percent of the Pocahontas School District's budget. SRSCA dollars are critical to student success.

*The loss of SRSCA funding will have serious consequences for rural school districts. Children in rural West Virginia counties need these financial resources to better compete with other students. These resources purchase books and supplies. A loss of revenues will make it difficult for schools in rural communities to attract and keep talented teachers.*

### The Impact of SRSCA Funding on Roads and Bridges



There are over 36,247 miles of public roads and 6,636 bridges in West Virginia. Counties in West Virginia maintain approximately 28,877 miles of rural roads. Most of these roads are rural and are critical to economic growth, the creation of jobs, public safety, and the social health of small communities. The loss of SRSCA funding will dramatically and negatively impact the ability of counties to maintain and repair local roads and bridges.

### SRSCA Value Added through Resource Advisory Committees (RACs)

The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act authorized the establishment of Resource Advisory Committees (RACs) as a mechanism for local community collaboration with federal land managers in recommending Title II resource-benefit projects on federal lands. In 2008, **\$350,229** of SRSCA funding was allocated to Resource Advisory Committee activities in West Virginia to implement forest and ecosystem health projects ranging from forest thinning to road construction projects; these activities provide jobs and contribute to local economies.

The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act was enacted to respond to the crisis that developed in the 1980s when national policy and regulation restricted revenue generating activities on federal forest lands. SRSCA provides these resources to West Virginia:

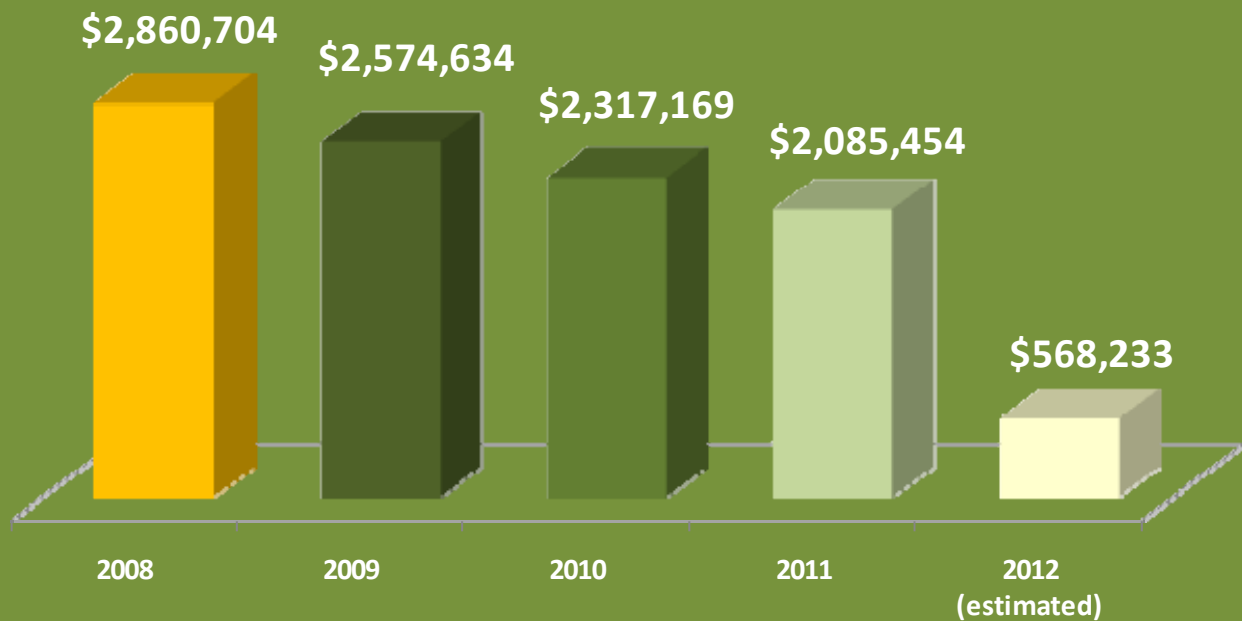
Title I - Payments to 13 counties for road infrastructure and the education of almost 35,600 West Virginia school children. In 2008 West Virginia received **\$ 2,462,323** in Title I funding.

Title II - Payments to counties for forest restoration projects. In 2008, West Virginia received **\$ 350,229** to fund Resource Advisory Committee approved projects.

Title III - Payments to counties for reimbursement of Search and Rescue efforts carried out on Federal Lands. In 2008, West Virginia received **\$ 48,151** in Title III Funding.

Total SRSCA Payments to West Virginia in 2008: **\$ 2,860,704**

### State of West Virginia: Secure Rural Schools & Community Self-Determination Act Receipts



Philippi WV—Covered Bridge

Partnership for Rural America Campaign

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Joel Yelverton or Marc Kelley Phone: (877) 778-7252

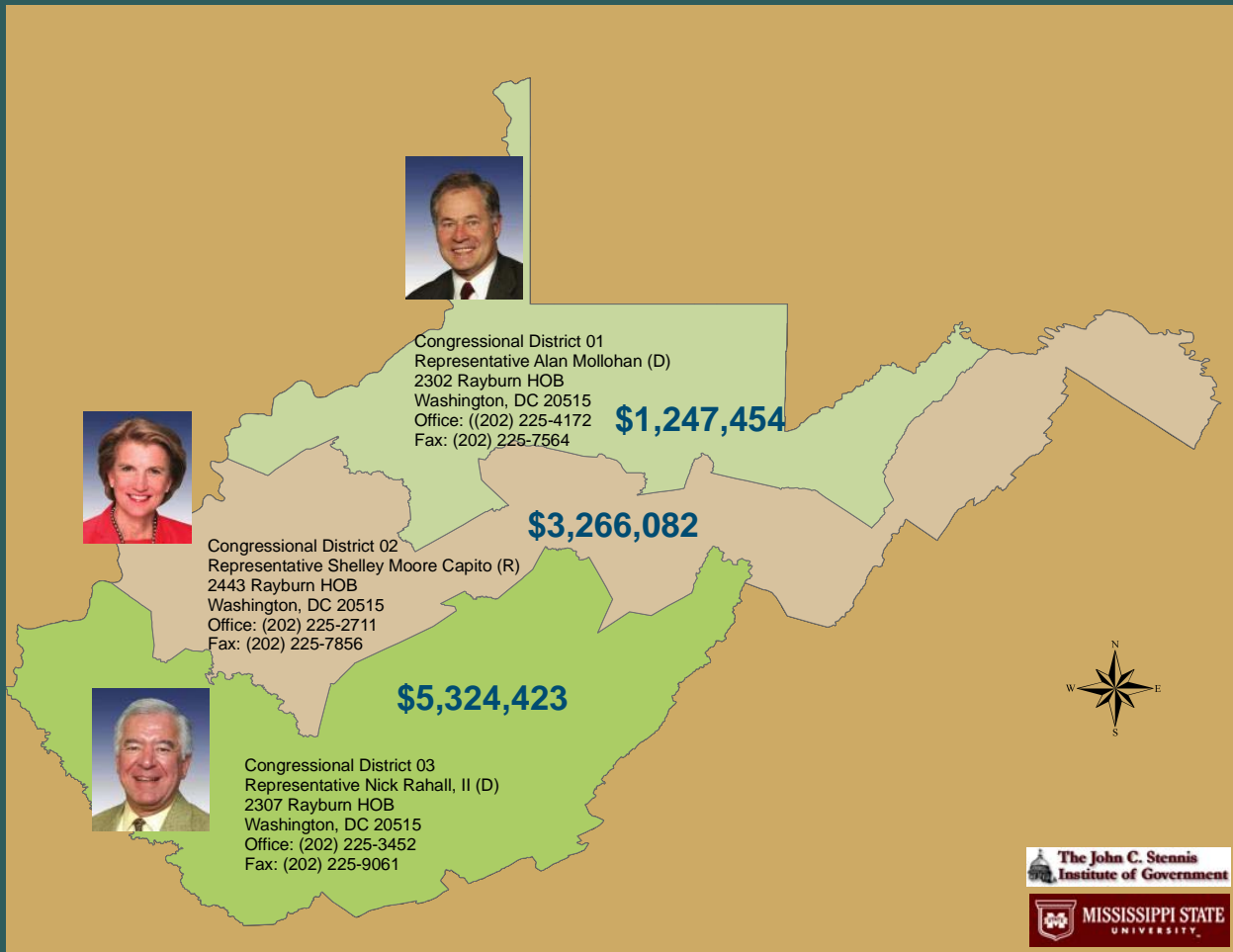
<http://www.partnershipforruralamerica.org>

Total 2008—2011 SRSCA Payments to West Virginia: \$9,837,961

Secure Rural Schools & Community Self-Determination Act

Funding to Rural West Virginia Counties and School Districts 2008—2011

Total Funding to West Virginia: \$9,837,961



- West Virginia received \$2.860,704 in 2008
- This number will fall to \$568,233 in 2012
- This is a loss of almost \$2.3 million



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TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE NOW

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