

January 17, 2006 Opequon Project Team meeting notes 6:00-8:00 p.m.

(times noted are approximate)

Facilitator: Jared Bartley, Canaan Valley Institute

Guest Speaker: John Schmidt

Also present: Sandra Bernardi, Tanya Borisova, Richard Demoske, Cindy Gunderson, Ron Gunderson, Stephen Knipe, Stephen Knipe II, Kieran O'Malley, Ray Pichot, Robert Schnably, Howard Strauss, Bill Zinner

Handouts: Agenda for this meeting, Upper Potomac Roundtable conference flyer

5:45 Gathering, sign-in

6:00 Introductions/announcements:

a. A "Targeted Watershed Grant" full proposal being prepared by Virginia Tech/several partners – deals with the Opequon watershed, mostly VA portion, but might be fencing/cover crops opportunities in WV portion. *Tatiana reaffirmed that there will most likely be an opportunity for further information gathering and BMP implementation in the WV portion of the watershed. If I remember correctly she said that they would want to put BMPs in place to monitor their effectiveness.*

b. Upper Potomac Roundtable conference March 2 & 3, 2006 - this Project Team will be featured, with Bonnie Stubblefield representing us

c. WV Potomac Tributary Strategy IMPLEMENTATION PLAN is final and has been submitted to Ches. Bay Program, available at www.wvnet.org, also at www.wvdep.org (offices, Div. of Water and Waste Management, Chesapeake Bay, which is on the right, under Watershed Management)

d. the \$5000 project location still needs to be settled – meeting soon with Poor House Farm Park committee

e. had public meeting about "Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)" for streams in Potomac Direct Drains watersheds Dec. 19, 2005. Public comment period through Jan. 30. The part about maximum acreage disturbed (future growth portion of sediment allocation strategy) seems especially relevant. See www.wvdep.org/wvtmdl for the PowerPoint presentation. *There was general consensus that the .5% set-aside for future growth would be insufficient in this part of the state. I reiterated that the comment period was open until the end of the month, and that the state really wanted to hear what people thought about that part.*

6:25 WV Make It Shine Application (similar program = REAP or Clean Streams) for their cleanup scheduled April 1-9 with an application deadline of Feb. 1st. REAP Application deadline is March 1st. Do we want to do this? Action: Let Alana know preferred **date and place**, and she can submit the application. *They definitely want to do a cleanup, but didn't want to commit to a specific place (they said there are plenty of options). They really want to do the cleanup in May (May 6th), not April. I'm not sure that's possible, but I wasn't sure if REAP has specific dates or not (I thought the 1st thru 9th was for Make it Shine), so that's still out there. Since, the application isn't due until March 1st, they decided to wait until the February meeting to make a definite decision.*

6:30 Our mailing to "landowners-along-the-Opequon-in-Berkeley-County" return postcards summary: 34 respondents out of 189 letters delivered = 18% response rate – pretty good!

-27 want to stay informed about meetings/events, 17 are interested in canoeing/kayaking events, 15 are interested in monitoring, 9 wanted more info about rain gardens, 7 wanted information on free soil testing, 13 wanted advice about which Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be appropriate to install, 4 seek financial help to install BMPs, 9 wanted info about maintaining septic systems, 8 know of specific areas of trash along the creek, and 2 had an "other" question.

Action: any follow-up discussion, impressions, how we would change it next time we do this? Should there be a next time? (e.g. Jefferson Co. creekside residents?) *The consensus was that it would be beneficial to do a similar mailing for Jefferson Co. residents, and that there should be a follow-up mailing (at least with info about meeting dates, etc) for those that responded to the initial survey.*

6:40 John Schmidt, US Fish and Wildlife Service, WV coordinator of “Partners for Fish and Wildlife” Program

7:00 questions for Mr. Schmidt?

Action: are there any known properties where this Project Team can be a liaison between landowner and Mr. Schmidt? Specific properties already under contract where we can help plant trees, etc.?

It was suggested that the group could be most useful by promoting John’s program, especially in Berkeley County (he has 2 projects in Berkeley County vs. 22 in Jefferson). Also, a few people gave John landowner names/locations for potential sites. John stated that he prefers to work with watershed groups, and therefore that projects for those groups would receive high priority.

7:10 Alana and Bonnie Shawyer making progress on Opequon “watershed assessment” – One goal is to do a “TEAM” assessment this spring of one subwatershed, which entails walking the creek and looking for sources of pollution.

Actions: continue considering the question: WHICH SUBWATERSHED?? Give us input on specific pollution sources (nutrients, fecal coliform, sediment) AND potential project sites. Meanwhile, CVI is helping us to prepare a map to show boundaries of these subwatersheds: Hoke Run, Eagle Run Tuscarora Creek, Dry Run, Evans Run, Shaw Run, Buzzard Run, Hopewell Run, Middle Creek, Goose Creek, Three Run, Mill Creek, Sylvan Run, Torytown Run, Turkey Run Silver Spring Run

They really didn’t think they had the info they needed to make a decision on this.

Jared Bartley can help us with CVI’s Watershed Restoration Template – which things do we want to rate, etc.?

7:25 Stream Partners Grant due April 15th. Do we want to prepare a proposal (using another org. as conduit because we are not a “501(c)3”) for:

- **CVI’s time to help us prioritize a subwatershed (see below)**
- Small, on-the-ground projects (e.g. plant shrubs = \$??)
- Postage to do a mailing to Jefferson Co. residents along the Opequon (assume 200 pieces times .39, plus 200 times .24 = \$126)
- Incubator and 100 sets of Coliscan EasyGel supplies to get started on e-coli monitoring –or- money to pay Shepherd University to run fecal coliform samples for us, plus supplies
- Two people’s travel expenses to Watershed Celebration day in Sept. or October
- Other project ideas we proposed over the summer
 - E.g. buy 500 rain barrels, develop a fact sheet about using them, advertise them, and sell them at a price just to cover our expenses
 - E.g. work with City of Martinsburg on a storm drain marking program – one reason they have not pursued it is they weren’t sure this Project Team was very enthusiastic about it when it was brought up this summer...are we?
- Contract with group like Center for Watershed Protection to design a project like changing around a parking lot to reduce impervious surface
- Other ideas/expenses? *The only other idea that was mentioned was signage at road stream-crossings. There was general debate/discussion about the usefulness of this.*

Action: Need volunteer to oversee preparation of Stream Partners Grant application – can use March meeting to do this. 2nd Tuesday = March 14th. Can use Jennifer Pauer as contact in Alana's absence: 1-800-654-5227. We can all finalize the application on April 11th. *Alana received volunteer by e-mail later.*

7:50 preview of next meetings: Wednesday, February 15: stormwater practices, facilitated by Sherry Wilkins, guest speakers Steve Knipe (City of Martinsburg), Brian Seipp of Potomac Conservancy (How to create a rain garden). Note: meeting in different room in same building. March 14th meeting a self-run, working meeting for those working on projects (e.g. Stream Partners Grant application). April 11th meeting facilitated by Alana. Agenda items brainstormed with Sherry Wilkins during Feb. meeting. Will include finalizing Stream Partners application, drafting a monitoring plan for the season.

Adjourn 8:00