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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Martinsburg-** Opequon Creek Project Team has been recognized by the West Virginia Watershed Network for their accomplishments in improving watershed health through their development of partnerships. On November 5, 2011, the Opequon Creek Project Team was awarded a Partnership award during the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Watershed Celebration Day at Jackson's Mill.

The Opequon Creek Project Team (OCPT) is all about partnerships. In 2011 these partnerships have developed into some great success stories. They have become involved with the Chesapeake Bay Program and have been able to better understand the federal plan to restore the Bay while taking advantage of grant opportunities for local environmental benefits. They have coordinated projects ranging from re-establishing tree buffers along stream banks, planting rain gardens on public property to installing rain barrels. One unique project they call "Buffer In A Bag". They gave away 25 bare root seedlings of five different species, free of charge, to anyone that lived along a stream or lake in the Eastern Panhandle and responded to a mailing. This educates landowners about the importance of keeping stream banks in place and filtering pollutants.

"OCPT volunteers are into all kinds of different projects. They are busy cleaning streams, planting trees, talking with people, collecting water monitoring data and writing grants to fund them all," said Jennifer Pauer, WVVN member. "They have so many great partners because people want to be associated with an organization that is known for getting things done. These volunteers are really making a difference and people notice."

OCPT partners include Faith Christian Academy, Musselman High School, the City of Martinsburg, Berkeley County Government, Berkeley/Jefferson County Master Gardeners, WV Division of Forestry, WV Department of Environmental Protection and many more.