

**OPEQUON CREEK PROJECT TEAM, INC.**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**December 7, 2011**

- Meeting Held At:** P.S.S.D. Conference Room, District Way, Martinsburg, WV
- Present:** Sandra Bernardi, Martin and LouAnn Elliott, Mary and Peter Palmer, Jay and Sarah Pasman, Herb Peddicord, George Snider, Diane and Gary Sylvester, Lou and Jake Scavnicky
- Meeting Opened** Lou thanked the group for their contribution in 2011 and stated that there will be no formal meeting this evening. Instead we will dine and share ideas for the upcoming year.
- Lou began the discussion by announcing potential guest speakers he has contacted.
- Vicki Blazer, a USGS scientist at the Leetown Science Center. Vicki recently received the American Fisheries Society 2010 Publications Award for her article investigating the mortality of fish in the Potomac River basin. Her paper is entitled “Mortality of Centrarchid Fishes in the Potomac Drainage: Survey Results and Overview of Potential Contributing Factors,” and was published in the Journal of Aquatic Animal Health. Blazer was also recently recognized as the Protector of the Potomac by the Potomac RiverKeeper for her research on pathogenic factors that affect fish health.
  - Someone from the Fresh Water Institute, Shepherdstown, WV will speak regarding the Institute. Recognizing the value of clean water resources, the Freshwater Institute works with government, industry, nonprofits and individuals to shape sustainable, environmentally responsible solutions to water resource management.
  - Tanner Haid, Cacapon Institute's new Urban Forestry Coordinator.
- Lou also suggested several ideas he has for increasing membership:
- Eva and Francesco Visone, owners of Casa Visone on Queen Street, have agreed to partner with OCPT and host a “how to in the Casa Visone kitchen.” This event will be announced in the paper on a “first come, first served” registration basis and while Eva and Francesco teach attendees how to prepare a specific Italian dish, the OCPT will promote clean water in the Opequon Creek watershed.
  - Lou brought an article from the Journal newspaper from an organization asking for new members. He suggested we follow

suit with an announcement in the Journal and any other publication of a membership drive (OCPT is seeking new members). The article only needs 3 or 4 sentences which could be put in the Journal in addition to one of our meeting announcements which would include a guest speaker.

Martin stated that in order to encourage more participants at our scheduled events, we need to be more proactive in advertising and suggested:

- We post flyers at public venues such as Peddle and Paddle, Dicks, the library, schools, etc. LouAnn stated that she can send pdf files to all federal agencies in the Panhandle.
- Radio PSAs.
- We should have a flash mob mentality, utilizing Twitter and FaceBook.
- A potential Eagle Scout project could be acquisition and installation of benches along the Route 9 bike path.
- Future buffer plantings will benefit from rakes to reclaim loose soil.

Mary suggested, as an Eagle Scout project, building small wooden structures secured on 4x4 posts with our name, logo, and the message, “carry it in, carry it out.” The box will hold trash bags and an OCPT member will be responsible for keeping bags in the boxes.

Herb announced that all the Hollis Oaks have been sold. The fund raising event, sponsored by Herb, grossed \$635 minus \$135 for stakes and fencing, netting OCPT \$500. Certificates will be sent to all the participants. Given the success of this project, the suggestion was made to do the same thing using the three previous “champion trees” in the Panhandle. Herb will provide to the group, the species and location of those trees. George offered the use of his orchard to keep these trees until they are mature enough to market. Herb also stated that we can purchase bareroot seedlings from Clements, pot them, and maintain them until they mature.

The first spring planting on Herb’s calendar will be CREP funded and in Darksville (off of Route 11) on Middle Creek, at the Bryerly Mill Farm. Approximately 800 trees will be planted.

Also, Mrs. Hollida (next to the Roach buffer) is interested in having trees on her property along the creek. She has ~300 feet, but Herb stated we may be able to approach her upstream neighbors for additional creek frontage.

The question was posed to Herb, “If we have a property owner who is

interested in a buffer planting, can he find funding for the project?" He said he could.

The following subjects were then discussed.

- A poster contest in a local school. The poster will be for Opequon Creek Project Team to be used to announce upcoming events. The winner of the poster contest will receive either (1) an on-the water guided tour (the number of friends and family to be invited to be determined) of the Opequon or (2) a kayak and paddle.
- Lou asked if any members were planning to attend the Information Exchange in Front Royal. No one raised their hand.
- Martin suggested we could encourage the building industry to use LID methods such as swales instead of curbs and sidewalks and permeable materials for parking and driveways. Encourage farmers to install water systems for their livestock by using the "health of the animal" argument. Studies have shown bulls become sterile due to contaminants in the water.
- Martin also suggested we could introduce Scouts to the Opequon with float trips and they, in turn, can earn their canoe merit badge.
- George suggested we ask Curtis to speak again to the group and provide an update on the current status of the water treatment plants under his purview. This led to a discussion of the continuing degradation of water quality due to the treatment plants' effluent discharge. Discussion also followed as to the appearance of a conflict of interest by us having our meetings at the PSSD headquarters. We will approach EPCD and ask if we can use their conference room for future meetings.

Minutes of the meeting prepared by Sandra Bernardi, Secretary