

June 14, 2005 Opequon Project Team meeting 5:45-8:00 p.m. James Rumsey Technical Institute

Please refer to www.wvnet.org (the WV Potomac Tributary Strategy portion of that website) for resource documents such as a land use map and BMP chart that we used at this meeting. *Might not be posted there yet as of July 7, 2005...hopefully soon.*

Present: Jared Bartley, Sandra Bernardi, Carol Boughton, Twila Stowers Carr, Rich Demoske, Neil Gillies, Jim Giraytys, Alana Hartman, Steve Knipe, Dick Latterell, Scott Rhodeheaver, Bonnie Shawyer, George Snider, Howard Strauss, Bonnie Stubblefield

Began with introductions and brief re-cap.

There was an impromptu discussion about various aspects of the TMDL that we are expecting to receive for the Opequon Creek watershed next year. There will be a “preview” this fall (a public meeting to review the “allocation philosophy”) and until then Alana and others don’t know the answers to many of your questions, such as specifically where the pollution is coming from, and is the biological (invertebrate) impairment linked to sediment or some other pollutant?

We continued discussing prioritizing areas (subwatersheds?) within the watershed (using a new land-use map which showed 6 subwatersheds). This discussion needs to be continued/concluded at a later meeting.

We continued discussing prioritizing Best Management Practices based on effectiveness and ease of funding, etc. (using a new chart that shows the name of the practice on the left, and relative effectiveness at reducing Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and sediment). This discussion needs to be continued/concluded at a later meeting.

We started to brainstorm project ideas, with the understanding that others could be added through an e-mail to Alana or at a future meeting. Some of our ideas (please let me know if I forgot something!)

1. outreach to agricultural landowners, to let them know that cost-share is available for installing Best Management Practices. If we look at a chart of available cost share programs (through NRCS, USFWS, and other farm bill programs) and analyze which practices they support, we can choose a specific cost share program or two to bring to the public and help to promote. E.g. Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Partners for Wildlife, EQIP, WHP. Alana is continuing to research this in two aspects: which programs are in Berkeley and Jefferson Counties/which practices they support, and who the audience should be. Anyone interested in promoting these agricultural practices within the watershed is WELCOME to help!
2. regarding actual on-the ground agricultural projects, this group’s role might be to analyze whether there are some specific opportunities, then write up a paper that suggests the project to those who have the power to make it happen. Perhaps help write the grant proposal, etc.
3. Urban outreach ideas – especially stormwater outreach since Martinsburg and Berkeley County, as “MS4” entities, are required to do this outreach.
 - a. We could analyze what our local schools are doing on their own property regarding stormwater management and whether there are opportunities to develop teaching

- projects around any plantings/other improvements. E.g. Eagle School (?) has done something like this.
- b. We could draft a suggestion (to Steve Knipe and the Martinsburg utilities folks) that storm drains be labeled, including the manufacturer, the cost, the design, and which local groups of volunteers could be mustered to do the gluing of the labels.
 - c. We could develop signs saying you are entering the Opequon watershed and determine which roads to put them on, how much they would cost, whether DOH could partner with us, then carry it out or write it up as a suggestion for the county or city utilities folks.
 - d. Develop a list of small stormwater or other BMPs that an eagle scout could do if he were looking for a project idea
 - e. Help design and carry out a workshop to educate a certain group of people about proper stormwater practices, or other target BMPs.
 - f. Examine existing ideas for a stormwater poster campaign and look into funding a bus stop poster campaign, for example
 - g. Develop a packet of projects homeowners could do to improve stormwater management or other BMPs – use outreach materials already developed by ICPRB?
 - h. Partner with developers: Make a fact sheet that shows how good practices (reducing runoff, reducing impervious surface, increasing water recharge) can be cheaper for developers, then distribute to developers or other intended audience
 - i. Get a grant to order a bunch of rain barrels, then send a mailing to homeowners to send in \$20 to buy one, show up at a certain day at fairgrounds to pick them up
 - j. Use existing good sites as demonstrations and arrange guided tour with key audience, e.g. Hedgesville High School?
 - k. Decide whether we have a single, unifying message that can become a graphic or logo, so that whatever project we're working on, we'll remind ourselves and others that a watershed is a cycle where a bunch of things interact (is this possible?)
 - l. Alternative to "k" above, is to have a series of very simple messages that capture one aspect at a time. E.g. "garbage in, garbage out" or "when it rains, it drains."
4. Any project idea \$5000 or less can be applied for under Stream Partners Program, applications due in spring and money awarded Sept. 1 (2006)
 5. Any riparian buffer demonstration project \$5000 or under can be considered – this money is already available from the Ches. Bay Program and West Virginia has earmarked it for Opequon. Need ideas! Should be close to road, landowner allows a sign explaining the site, etc.
 6. Researching landowners along the mainstem for targeted mailings/project ideas. If the landowners are businesses or public parks, cost of projects might be covered by some budget or other. This would also give us an idea of the land use along the mainstem. **THIS IS SOMETHING WE CAN GET STARTED ON THIS SUMMER WITH A FEW VOLUNTEERS AND A DATE TO MEET AT THE COURTHOUSE!**
 7. After doing #6, do the same thing for some of the major tributaries of the Opequon.
 8. Some type of survey of the watershed, either using TEAM method, walking and mapping with GPS, combination of more land use type coverages in a GIS, hire someone to do it professionally to our specifications???

Bonnie S. thanked Mr. Strauss for attending and he gave us some insights on watershed group sustainability. More specifically, a dedicated funding source would ensure that the watershed improvement projects would continue despite the tendency for volunteers to get burned out over time.

Adjourned around 8:10 p.m.