

July 12, 2005 Opequon Project Team meeting notes 5:45-8:00 p.m. by the side of Opequon Creek!

(times noted are approximate)

**Present:** Mary Beth Bennett, Matt Benson, Sandra Bernardi, Roger Boyer, Twila Stowers Carr, Rich Demoske, Alana Hartman, Dennis Johns, Steve Knipe, George Snider, Howard Strauss, Sherry Wilkins

6:00 Began with introductions, ground rules\*, announcement that our meeting notes and resource documents are found at [www.wvnet.org](http://www.wvnet.org) (the WV Potomac Tributary Strategy portion of that website), and details of upcoming Aug. 13 event.

6:10 Alana handed out June 14 meeting notes and referred all to the project ideas outlined there (#1-8). Began to brainstorm new ideas for projects (starting with project idea #9):

9. Mr. Strauss' dedicated funding idea. Expects a draft from Sen. Unger soon; will e-mail it to Alana to distribute [later Mr. Strauss told Alana he will draft the legislation himself – will be forthcoming]. -might result in \$300,000-400,000/year  
-we discussed general concerns that the legislation be designed well. E.g. deal with possible conflict of interest on part of board members who have land to sell  
-envision a board of 30-40 people – federal mandates require long-term group, e.g farmland preservation board has a large amount each year and a match (?)  
-board should be diverse with representatives from various agencies and private citizens, and majority could rule (not necessarily consensus). Include DEP oversight and local oversight.  
-board could appoint representatives of the various watersheds. Projects in >1 watershed would get more priority, e.g. if this county fund could be used to enhance cost share for agricultural projects  
-if fast tracked, could be in place by July 1 (this might have changed in light of the fact that Sen. Unger had not begun writing it after all)

10. Monitoring - we discussed the VA Opequon TMDL group's ([www.tmdl.net/forum/default.asp](http://www.tmdl.net/forum/default.asp)) desire to have a volunteer monitoring program for fecal coliform, and their desire to include the WV stakeholders (us!) Some were interested and will try to attend the VA training in August sometime. We'll need to seek funding for the lab testing fee and possibly other expenses, but the Shenandoah University lab will do the analyses if we can collect samples.

The biological monitoring our group does could be seen as also an outreach tool, e.g ask Hedgesville High School, boy scouts, IWLA to participate with us.

11. Twila – dye project – her team is trying to learn how groundwater moves locally by using dye-tracing.

Comment: Alana and Jim Lawrence should get together so our group doesn't have to re-tread ground the VA group has already covered. Also, "The Opequon Watershed" (mostly VA) and our Opequon Project Team should communicate regularly.

12. writing grants for Chesapeake Bay Program funds – isn't there a rolling grant year for one of the grants? (Alana wasn't aware of this one but suggested CB Small Watershed Grants @ [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org) , proposal due date is early February)

13. compost bin campaign – similar to rain barrel idea from June 14: we order a lot of these, then advertise (Mary Beth Bennett has experience with this) and have folks show up at a mall parking

lot, for example, and pick up (and pay for) their bin. Reduces waste stream, need for fertilizer. Solid waste authority should be a partner.

14. split into teams and digest the background information that Richard has compiled on CD-ROM – especially to start compiling information for an Opequon Creek “assessment”

15. putting signage at Opequon Creek access points – or would this result in vandalism?

Alana introduced ideas for projects that had crossed her desk in recent days:

16. urban rain barrel art auction to raise \$ and awareness at same time

17. this Project Team could encourage local landowners/farmers to have their soil tested. NRCS would like this. See WVCA’s new “nonpoint pollution” brochure that lists the phone number of extension offices to whom to bring soil samples

18. a “watershed plan” for the Opequon is definitely needed. Alana will need help pulling together this information over the next year.

During this segment, we also talked about the projects listed on the June 14 meeting notes, and decided that 3 of them could/should be worked on before the September meeting:

-Sherry Wilkins could look into project idea #3.i., ordering rain barrels in bulk and arranging to deliver them to interested landowners. Homeowner associations need to be compiled so they could be contacted.

-Project idea #6, George, Sandra, and Alana will start researching landowners along the Opequon for targeted mailings/project ideas. [done Aug. 15 and week of Aug. 22 with Howard’s help] Note: State of WV needs to take the lead on digitizing tax maps in a standard way.

-Project idea #8, beginning to survey the watershed [done in part, on Aug. 13...abbreviated biological survey, then visual survey of last 3 miles of Opequon Creek from canoes]

7:45 Matt Benson introduced this draft of the survey the WVU research team would like to use with the random sample of local residents, and is asking all present to fill it out and also to offer him comments about its format/content.

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\*ground rules brainstormed by the group:

- start on time/end on time
- acknowledge that background info exists, and make selves familiar with it, e.g. Rich’s CD-ROM
- limit comments to respect time constraints and give others a chance
- respect everyone’s ideas
- limit using initials/acronyms, for the benefit of the group