

May 16, 2006 Opequon Project Team meeting notes 6:00-8:00 p.m. Action items in RED

James Rumsey Technical Institute's Room A-7

(times noted are approximate)

Facilitator: Alana Hartman, WV Department of Environmental Protection

Also present: Tanya Borisova, Bill Hansbury (JCWC), Richard Demoske, Jim Giraytys (TOW), Dick Latterell (JCWC), Jim Lawrence (TOW), Peter Vila (JCWC), Bill Zinner (Creekside Anglers)

Note:

* **JCWC** = Jefferson County Watersheds Coalition, which is concerned with all watersheds in Jefferson Co., but has mostly focused on those draining directly to the Potomac River.

* **TOW** – The Opequon Watershed, Inc., which covers all 4 counties of the Opequon Creek watershed

* **Creekside Anglers** – has been mostly focused on Tuscarora Creek

Handouts: June 3 float trip postcards, electronic recycling information, tire collection information (June 1-3), Sleepy Creek project notes, Virginia's Opequon/Abrams Creek TMDL flyer

6:10 –Introductions and pre-meeting discussion led to a description of each watershed group operating in our region – see “note” above.

Additional notes about JCWC: About 9 years old, has somewhere between 8 and 25 active members, loosely organized, without by-laws or dues. Has operated on grants, and most work has been on surface waters/benthic invertebrates. Recently, focus on bacterial surveys. Also the usual watershed assoc. things like trash clean-ups. Recognizes sedimentation is also significant problem.

Additional notes about TOW: Steve Bauserman was founding member and is a Winchester City Councilman. It's a 501(c)(3), and originally covered entire watershed (VA and WV). Involved in monitoring with Friends of Shenandoah River, volunteer bacterial monitoring program with VA DEQ, and has co-sponsored events with IWLA in Winchester. (JCWC had also at one time collected water samples for Friends of Shen. For about 1 year but someone else took it over.) Thinking a lot more along lines of outreach to community.

Being a 501(c)(3) takes effort to do annual reporting. TOW should be able to be a fiscal agent for Opequon Project Team and also possibly the other groups represented here tonight (?)

Additional notes about Creekside Anglers: monitoring benthics on Tuscarora Creek, which stays around 60 degrees year round (because of springs) and has high oxygen content. Fecal coliform not #1 killer of fish: lack of food is. Has 55 members, but core of 9-10 that show up and do everything. Plan to continue their efforts on Tuscarora Creek. Badly eroded property upstream of recent planting site is currently being sold to developer who in turn is making streamside property up for sale. Maybe opportunity. Peter Vila mentioned: Rattlesnake Run developer recently adopted unique kind of covenants (Potomac Conservancy was involved) – **maybe Bill Zinner/Creekside Anglers could consider something like this to recommend to the new owner of the bad erosion property along Tuscarora.**

Other related groups in area: Friends of Tuscarora – not currently active. Ruritan group? Alana noted other groups that are similar and active: IWLA, Potomac Valley Audubon Society, and Potomac Conservancy.

6:45 back to agenda – mentioned the handouts...

As Sleepy Creek project update was circulated, Richard mentioned Christmas trees recycled as bank stabilization/fish habitat. Alana said DNR has this program and **will find out if OPT can get involved in publicizing it.**

As VA TMDL handout was circulated, discussion followed about geography of Opequon Creek in Virginia. We'll have to revisit when we have a better map.

Upcoming activities, including June 3 float trip and SOS workshops with Blue Heron Environmental Network (Alana mentioned if Tim Craddock approves, one can simply download the SOS test from the WV SOS website and possibly pass the test and become certified again for the year.

7:00 Project updates

-Debrief after April 29 tree planting: besides notes on agenda, Alana mentioned Rebecca MacLeod recommended we auger the holes for trees next time. We looked at photos from the event. Bill (?) recommended we post them on our wvnet.org webpage, also. **Alana will find out whether screens were added to the tree tubes or not. – later found out they have not yet been obtained.**

-Looked at photos of other projects (rain garden demo on County property, South St.; War Memorial Park; Orchard View Intermediate) Did not feel we had time to look at photos and preliminary results of the first 12 miles of Opequon Creek TEAM Assessment. Will do at a future meeting.

-Looked at photos of rain garden in Winchester. Infiltration type...has an underdrain, I think. Jim Lawrence might be able to show the plans to those of us who are interested. Richard asked if rain gardens need maintenance, and Jim replied yes, the soil might have to be replaced after a while.

-Rain Barrel pilot project: people at this meeting had several ideas for storage spaces – PLEASE e-mail storage space ideas to Alana!

7:30 HOW CAN WE PARTNER WITH EACH OTHER?

-earlier discussion about each group revealed there aren't enough of us in any one group to do big, continued-effort projects. But maybe together we could do bigger, more long-term or intensive projects.

-Is there a website all groups could use, since we have similar missions? I.e. for outreach purposes, interested people would go to one website and see all 4 groups' efforts. Potomac Headwaters RC&D might have one. **Alana asked Roger Boyer and he said it could possibly be developed. He will check to see if new VISTA, Jennifer Boserman, has this ability.** Currently paying for the website but not using it.

-Project Idea we all need to follow up on: develop a 3X4 poster about watershed group activities/water quality, and have all 4 groups as the contacts listed. We could pay a Shepherd U graphics arts student a small fee to make it pretty, have a copy printed for each of our groups, bring to various events. Ideas for events and/or places to post the poster or a smaller, flyer version: Earth Day Winchester, Opportunity Winchester, Community Wellness Festival, Fall Fitness Fair, Winchester Trout Unlimited, IWLA, County Fairs, University, Berkeley County Youth Fair, the 4 events Creekside Anglers put on annually, Tuscarora Ruritan Hall (where 4H meets), War Memorial Park as a kiosk, Sparks, Lowe's, outfitters, NCTC, Yankauer Preserve, Martinsburg Rec Center.

-Jefferson County creekside landowner tax record search: Dick L., Peter V., Tanya B. and Alana can do this. (for a future targeted mailing like we did last fall)

-publicizing our monitoring results for mobilizing the community: The Virginia monitoring results could be posted on the website? We also talked in-depth about a possibly public meeting (like NCTC Thursday evening community meetings) to share results with public and show them especially that fecal coliform levels are still high. Peter Vila did a similar meeting for Town Run residents. If anyone is interested in working on this meeting idea, please let Alana or other watershed group leader know.

-or have a public meeting about “how things will change in 2010 because of Ches. Bay impairment, and how this will stall our residential/economic development

There seemed to be general agreement that there are a lot of possibilities for partnering with one another, and at the very least we should forward our group’s activities announcements to each other.

Adjourn 8:00