

Sept 12, 2006 Opequon Project Team meeting notes 6:00-8:00 p.m. Action items in RED

James Rumsey Technical Institute's Conference Room

(Times noted are approximate)

Facilitator: Alana Hartman, WV Department of Environmental Protection

Also present: Mary Beth Bennett, Sandra Bernardi, Tanya Borisova, Richard Demoske, Rebecca MacLeod, Caron Melton, Sue Ann Palmer, Herb Peddicord, Grant Smith, George Snider, Bonnie Stubblefield, Bill Zinner

Handouts: invitation to VA Opequon team's public meeting Sept.13

6:00 –Introductions: heard from Sue Ann Palmer, who is interested in developing her Tuscarora Creek property into an Enviro-educational center. Will let us know if it passes fire code, etc. E. Burke St. 150-200 ft of creekside length.

Also learned Herb (forester) is now involved with the 4 county area: Jeff, Berk, Morgan and half of Hampshire. Lives on Evans Run.

6:20 - Upcoming activities: see agenda, plus Oct. 6 public grand opening of new Judicial Center. Under Rain Barrel Workshop, we decided we should go ahead and plan the next one for this fall, also. Transportation of barrels will be more expensive – we could try to do it on our own **using Ryder in Hagerstown.**

6:25 Schedule of meetings as written in agenda. **Also see Financial Updates, at bottom of these meeting notes.**

6:30 Project Updates

1. logo/brochure/tabletop display: Sandra, George, and Tanya have been working on options. Brochure costs \$350 for first 1000, then only \$100 more for next 1000. Rebecca mentioned we could get on EPCD's agenda and ask for their \$100 of support – begin to build a relationship with them. **Alana and George will attend their meeting 9/20/06.** Richard mentioned brochure should be on recycled paper; **Sandra will check on cost. Send map suggestions to Sandra/Tanya.** Caron offered the use of her (DEP) tabletop display, 4 panel arrangement.

2. Judicial Center rain garden – City plans to begin excavation soon. Alana working on ordering the soil. Master Gardeners are figuring out which plants they can donate from personal gardens, and where else to buy mostly native plants.

3. War Memorial Park – whether to use rain barrel funds for buffer planting still undecided. Maybe wait until project happens and see what it is like, also talk to Parks Director. Will try to wait for new OCPT logo before ordering project sign. Should be happening by end of month.

4. rain garden at Orchard View Intermediate – no news

5. Opequon Creek Assessment (by kayak, using TEAM method) next one scheduled for 9/18, then only 2 reaches left to do.

6. Opequon Watershed (VA and WV) Targeted Watershed Grant update – Tanya reiterated WVU’s willingness to help OCPT do outreach, etc.

7. Greystone development’s Nature Walk, now called “Backyard Conservation Tour!! Residents only, contact Louise Finch.

8. Dupont Soccer Fields green parking lot – construction has begun. Not much soil so more grass than “plants.”

9. Dam Removal on Tuscarora Creek – some of the money is gone, so next year they’ll try for money to do both dams. DNR wants to have the scour; TU will be partner on the design.

7:10 Grant Smith: Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle: www.landtrustepwv.org

-Organization is 12 years old, preserves farmland, open spaces, views.

-Easement is like a deed

-supported legislation to do Farmland Protection Board and got funding mechanism approved.

-all 3 counties have agreed to do this.

-farmer gets paid all or part of the value of his land

-link to this Board on the LTEP website www.landtrustepwv.org

-Federal tax law now more generous for easement donation – expires next yr but might be renewed.

-haven’t really pursued owners of forest land, but there is option of Forest Legacy (federal program that pays for easements on forest land, but there isn’t much money. One has been approved so far – it is in Morgan Co.)

-want to reach out to other organizations so that others like absentee owners will learn about this possibility. Target at least 40 acre owners.

-now that ~10-12 counties trying to get the Fed money, it’s harder to get as match. Trying to get political momentum to get state to offer \$ as incentive.

2 main efforts currently: 1) easements – even initial conversation is worthwhile because sometimes takes years to pursue possibility and finalize

2) pursuing funding

Who pays for the needed survey/required steps? Answer: in Jefferson Co, encourage owners to co-hold with Farmland Protection Board. Then Board usually ends up paying for the needed paperwork.

During sale of protected land, the title search would turn up the easement. Less valuable land then, so reduces tax owed.

Lawyers in Berk. Co. and elsewhere are beginning to learn how to work with these.

What about eminent domain situations? Answer: LTEP’s contract says “There may be no more easements after this one,” so landowner can’t grant new power line, etc.

Personal contacts are very important...if you know someone who is interested, let Bonnie or Grant know. **Grant suggested we include the brochure in our next mailing.**

How long does process take? Ans: LTEP’s part is quick, but Farmland Protection Board’s part can take a lot longer. Rating system, attorney, County Commission, etc.

Idea voiced that if farms show up as hotspots in the monitoring, then projects done there by OCPT, getting an easement in place would ensure our/farmer's work was preserved.

Adjourn 8:00

Financial items posted at front of room for discussion's sake:

Stream Partners Budget:

\$2689.25 for CVI (check)

\$525 Admin. (postcards \$25, RC&D \$500) (check)

\$1500 fecal coliform monitoring, which is 4 sites and one duplicate monthly at \$25 each. Spent \$50 so far at 2 sites. Should decide on 2 sites to stick with for rest of the year. Decided to try above and below where Tuscarora enters Opequon, and above and below the Scrabble Road WWTP outfall (which has odor and foam).

Rain Barrel Workshop Budget:

59 barrels at \$10 each = \$590

+\$150 shipping

+~\$650 parts for 50 barrels

=~\$1400

Rent of Roundhouse for event and storage: \$350

Income from this: selling ~45 barrels/kits @\$35 each = \$1575 **Should be thinking about what to use this for!**
