

**January 9, 2007 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:** Jared Bartley, Sandra Bernardi, Richard Demoske, Ron Gunderson, Sharon Lee, Mary Palmer, Jennifer Pauer, Bonnie Stubblefield, Diane & Gary Sylvester, Sara Wuertenberg

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6:10 –Introductions

6:15 –financial report as stated in agenda; no ideas yet as to how to redirect the \$100. **Someone will have to attend another EPCD meeting** (Feb 21 is next one) to ask for the funds to be redirected: buffer mulch? Gary's rain barrel reimbursement? Website related fee?

6:20 - Upcoming activities: reviewed these as printed in agenda; Feb meeting is Tues. the 13<sup>th</sup>.

-Jan 10 at 7 pm is Berkeley Comm. Pride board meeting, covering 2007 initiative. 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room of Jefferson Distributing.

-Jan 10 Vicki Blazer speaking at Leetown Lab 7:30 hosted by PVAS. Subject: fish kills in VA/WV.

-Jan 11 NCTC lecture

New business:

**1. Jennifer Pauer, WVDEP: Building the organization.**

Stream Partners grant program: usually \$100K from general revenue. This year \$77K. New budget for next year, asked for \$130K. Purpose = seed money, to help Watershed Associations (WSA's) become established and sustainable. New rules fall 2006.

Recommends "Starting up Handbook," from the River Network. Alana's copy was left with Sandra.

Purpose of organizing: to become a strong organization with a firm foundation.

- written procedure to protect you

- internal conflict happens

- e.g. board member has project in back-yard (not necessarily bad, but need procedure in place for project selection).

- helps with applying for grant money

- elections protect you from bad leadership

- by-laws outline what you have to do to be a member, term limits for officers, list of responsibilities of officers, etc.

- having 2 people required for signing checks creates accountability

Jennifer would be willing to work with a committee to draft by-laws.

Once you have these things established, you're home free.

Committees can be formed, e.g. Outreach Committee, Project Committee, Adopt-a-highway Committee.

Board of Directors – e.g. Deckers Creek hands out a slip with requirements written on it: must be paid member, write a newsletter article, and attend 4 of 5 business meetings annually.

Possible duty of board: vote on Stream Partners grant application budget.

Incorporating and filing for tax-exempt status are 2 different things:

Incorporating goes through the state, see chapter 31E on wvsos.com

Incorporating requires \$45 once, then \$25 annually thereafter

If incorporated, can receive donations

If incorporated, there is limited liability for board of directors

Filing for tax-exempt status goes through federal IRS. Have a lawyer look over the papers if possible.

Question: need for liability insurance? JP: Yes sometimes a good idea but expensive. “Board of Risk Management” Insurance is one possible vendor. Another option is to have a waiver to be signed not to hold the group liable. Local Haz Waste contractor mentioned to a member recently that they should not ever move a 55 gallon drum during cleanups – consider it haz waste. SAFETY IS #1 CONSIDERATION.

Q: could state make an umbrella policy for volunteers? At this point that is through the Board of Risk Management. A statewide watershed organization could work on this issue..

Q: could the board become “bonded?” JP does not have the knowledge to address this question, would suggest asking a lawyer.

Jennifer left us 2 copies of materials in a folder called “Organizational Structure Tips.” Sandra has one copy and Alana has the other – all are welcome to borrow this. *Contents: Organizational Structure outline, September 2001, Articles of Incorporation template, Steps to Incorporation and Tax Exempt Status, 2 samples of By-Laws, and WV Code Chapter 31E regarding nonprofit corporations.* Jennifer also gave Sandra materials from the River Network. See above Starting Up Handbook, this is Alana’s copy.

Action items arising from discussion: **Alana should send an e-mail to group about forming a committee to draft by-laws (never did this – Sandra took it on herself – thank you!), Mary can investigate buying insurance, and Alana can check on South Branch WSA’s company used for single event insurance.**

2. Buffer project site selection – discussed and Alana will proceed with this. Brainstorming yielded three possibilities for sites:

- a. Hess property/Stone Bridge. Needs fence first – should discuss CREP and John Schmidt’s USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife programs. Rapidly eroding.
- b. New “Brookside” Development on Tuscarora Creek is upstream of our ’06 planting. Berk. Assoc. = landscape work. Concern that installing buffers at developments would result in no maintenance of the buffer.
- c. Mill Creek watershed somewhere, now that it is a priority subwatershed. Maybe school property downstream of the two orchard properties? Sharon can check on what property that is.

## **7:25 Project updates**

1. skipped ahead to discuss mailing to creekside landowners. The Mill Creek creekside addresses have all been copied down...thank you, Sharon and Mary! Highlights: Board of Ed owns 23 acres – we suspect this is the new Mountain Ridge Intermed. School. National Fruit owned 477 acres plus 531 acres, but we think this has been sold. Roughly 120 addresses. **WVU will draft survey for those recipients.** Jefferson Co. mailing list now complete, also – **Alana will draft this mailing for review at Feb. meeting.** Should be shorter letter, highlight 8 or 9 things. Use our new brochure

for main ideas. Jared circulated Sleepy Creek's new draft of a buffer brochure to help give us ideas. Maybe in future we can use their brochure in our mailings? Explored idea of patronizing a local nursery – made notes of these places but decided might be inappropriate. Should we include LTEP brochure? (not sure of answer.)

2. website: Sandra tried Joomla, apparently need a host server. We should have a professional design our pages. Use Stream Partners grant, maybe. Jared knows someone at Shepherd U. who might do it, or maybe ask Jennifer Dotson at ICPRB? Maybe use the \$100 from EPCD for this? Sandra reserved "opequoncreek.com" Look at Rockymarsh Run's new website for ideas.
  3. Rain Barrel workshop – March 28 chosen. Bonnie and Gary might be able to pick up barrels at White House. **Alana will ask Steve Knipe if this date is ok for the Public Works Building.**
  4. logo/brochure/tabletop display: should form a committee around June to plan where this should appear and how many people are needed to "man" it. **Meanwhile, ideas:** ...maybe it can be set up in library for a while, also brochures at Chamber of Commerce, Viking St. Bonnie placed some brochures in Dunn Building (Co. offices). Possibly aim our display toward young audiences for Berk. Co youth fair, Jeff. Co. fair. Conservation Open House at NCTC. Apple Butter Festival in Morgan Co., Columbus Day weekend. Apple Harvest (Master Gardeners do this) 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend Oct. Watershed Celeb. Day, Nov.
  5. Judicial Center rain garden – watering hydrant was installed Dec 06. Also installed 2 reflectors donated by Nancy Rupert.
  6. War Memorial Park – Alana discussed planting options with Rebecca MacLeod and Sara Wuertenberg today. Rebecca will follow up with a draft planting plan.
  7. Opequon targeted watershed grant (VA and WV) – Jim had given Alana a quick update before meeting, but she didn't go into detail.
  8. Monitoring: fecal coliform monthly monitoring has begun, Coliscan supplies have been ordered by ICPRB and should be ready to deliver to us February.
- =Adjourn ~8:15