

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Local Streams Get Help From DEP

Berkeley County, West Virginia October 6, 2009

Canaan Valley Institute recently received \$448,082 from the Nonpoint Source Program of the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to help certain communities in southern Berkeley County reduce pollution in local streams. The funding, known as a Clean Water Act Section 319 grant, originated at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The overall project will take two to five years to implement, and can be used in any of the land area that drains rainwater or snowmelt toward Mill Creek or its tributaries, including Sylvan Run and Torytown Run. This means many residents of Inwood, Bunker Hill, and Gerrardstown can benefit from the project. The diverse programs within the grant are designed to reduce the amount of fecal coliform bacteria and sediment running off the land and ending up in Mill Creek. Canaan Valley Institute will soon begin using the funds to offer coupons to homeowners for part of the cost of pumping septic systems. Homeowners can also apply for part of the cost of replacing damaged septic systems, or installing extra treatment to remove nitrogen from the septic system. A stream channel repair project is planned and several workshops will be offered on topics ranging from rain barrels to septic system maintenance. They will provide local residents with information to help them manage runoff and wastewater on their own properties. "The actions of each household in a neighborhood can really add up to big improvements in a local waterway," said DEP's Potomac Basin Coordinator, Alana Hartman. "We'll be working with Canaan Valley Institute to help get information distributed." These efforts will build on other recent cost-share and outreach work done in southern Berkeley County by many others, including the Opequon Creek Project Team, Eastern Panhandle Conservation District, West Virginia Conservation Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, and Cacapon Institute. Some individuals within the community, including teachers and staff at Musselman High School, have also led efforts to reduce pollution during the past school year. Students there planted a green roof and trees on campus to filter and control rainfall runoff. Canaan Valley Institute's Watershed Circuit Rider, Kristin Mielcarek, stated, "This is an exciting partnership between a nonprofit organization and local government agencies that will allow us to work with a community in improving its aquatic resources through education and outreach as well as on the ground improvement projects." For more information on how you can participate in the program please contact:

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