

Rain Barrel Workshop New to the Potomac Valley!

By Melissa Merritt

On Saturday, February 11, 2012, the West Virginia Conservation Agency, sponsored by the Potomac Valley Conservation District, hosted a Rain Barrel Workshop at the Bank of Romney Community Center in Romney, WV. The workshop was one of the first of its kind for the Potomac Valley Conservation District! Participants learned about the benefits of rain barrels for improving water quality and also received one ready-made rain barrel for free. It is the hope that this workshop has initiated an interest in water conservation practices for the area that will generate more attention for further workshops held in the future. The workshop was financed through funding for the Chesapeake Bay.

The rain barrel workshop consisted of training participants on how to create a rain barrel and then steps on how to customize the rain barrel for their homes. Rain Barrels and hardware were provided to each participant at no cost. Lou Scavnicky, President of the Opequon Creek Project Team, joined by fellow member, Gary Sylvester, was the guest speaker for the workshop and provided several options for rain barrel designs. Some of the key concepts mentioned the many options for overflow once the barrel has been filled, and the option of hooking several rain barrels together for added storage. Added storage is key, since the rainfall falling on one home from one storm event can equate to almost 200 gallons of water.

Rain Barrels are very cost-effective solutions for conserving water. Not only do they help divert storm water from running directly into streams from gutters and impervious surfaces such as concrete, but provide a free source of soft water for gardens and lawns. A rain barrel can save around 1,300 gallons of water during peak summer months. With Hampshire County having the fastest growing population in the Potomac Valley Conservation District, every water-saving action makes a difference for the water resources in the area. Rain barrels are one of the key water-conservation methods the West Virginia Conservation Agency stresses to the public. Throughout the year, the WVCA will be working on more public workshop ideas to bring to Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral, Grant, and Pendleton Counties, the five counties of the Potomac Valley Conservation District, to illustrate water conservation. If there are any suggestions or interests for future programs, please contact Melissa Merritt at mmerritt@wvca.us.

