



AP photo

Opequon Creek flows under W.V. 45. Residents near the creek will be surveyed on the Opequon's environmental importance.

Survey seeks input on creek

■ A questionnaire about Opequon Creek is to be mailed to some 2,500 area households.

By **ROB SNYDER**
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

MARTINSBURG — Area residents will be asked what clean water is worth to them, when a survey, courtesy of West Virginia University, arrives in their mailboxes this week.

WVU Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics graduate research assistant Matt Benson said the survey, which will be mailed to 2,500 residents of Berkeley and Jefferson counties, as well as to an equal number of residents of Clarke and Frederick counties in Virginia this week, is designed to assess respondents' knowledge about and use of the Opequon Creek Watershed. The 15-question survey's bottom line is about the bottom line, that is, how much is a clean creek worth, Benson said.

"The goals of the survey are to estimate the dollar value and what

"The goals of the survey are to estimate the dollar value and what it's worth to clean up the creek."

MATT BENSON,
research assistant

it's worth to clean up the creek," Benson said this week from Morgantown.

The first section of the questionnaire asks residents about their recreational usage of the creek, what kinds of water quality problems they're aware of with it, and about residents' overall perceptions of the area's environmental well being.

In the second section, residents are asked to consider a proposal to clean up the Opequon Creek enough to support swimming and wading in its waters, and so the waterway could support year-round fish populations. The survey poses

See CREEK B2

JEFFERSON COUNTY

Juveniles to face school vandalism

■ Three boys will be charged for damaging Jefferson High School.

By **MATTHEW UMSTEAD**

month at Jefferson High School, the Ninth Grade complex and nearby T.A. Lowery Elementary, Jefferson County Sheriff's Detective S.W. Bonifant said Tuesday.

Two of the juveniles have confessed to wielding baseball bats and rocks to wreck the press box and concession stand at the

Head Start building within the same timeframe, Bonifant said.

The baseball bats and about 75 percent of the candy the trio removed from the concession stand were recovered, Bonifant said. The two boys' confessions have implicated the third, whom Bonifant had

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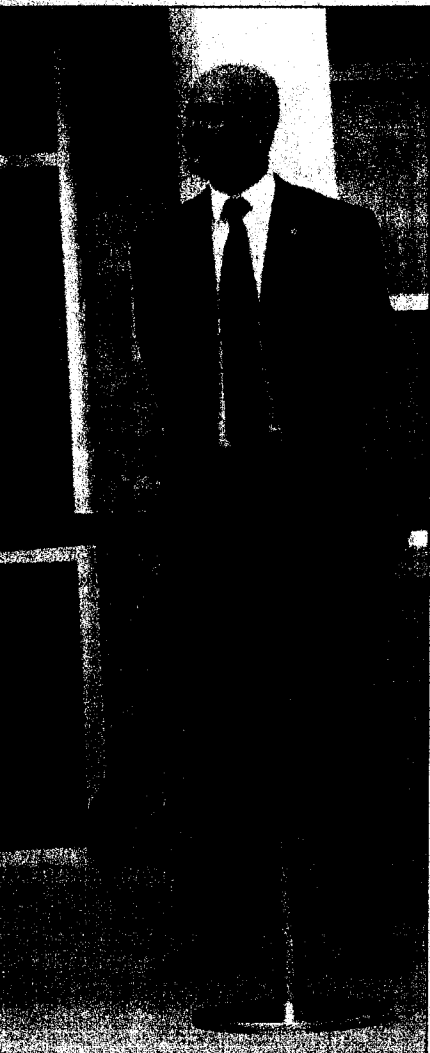


Photo courtesy of Sen. Byrd's Office

ert C. Bonner prepare to cut the ribbon
ded the effort to attract and build the

"They're not going to be training
ampus 24 hours a day," Sprinkle said.

Creek

FROM PAGE B1

a number of possible funding sources for a cleanup and asks residents how willing they would be to pay for the cleanup with an annual county tax or with a donation to a fund to improve the creek.

Part of an effort by researchers with the Mid-Atlantic Water Quality Project, the survey hopes to ascertain the level of activities the community will support, said WVU Department of Agriculture Professor Allen Collins in an interview Tuesday.

Benson said Virginia and West Virginia households would be sent slightly different surveys given the two states' different levels of progress in developing pollutant control measures for impaired waterways.

"Virginia is a little farther along with implementing water quality standards, but West Virginia is in the process of doing that," Benson said.

That state has begun developing an

implementation plan to reach pollution limits, called Total Maximum Daily Loads, for its waterways, said Collins, adding the Opequon Creek is one of the waterways designated as impaired, or exceeding allowable levels of TMDL's.

Collins said West Virginia's efforts are largely the product of a consent decree between the state and the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, which filed suit against West Virginia more than a decade ago to force lawmakers to begin to develop enforcement provisions built into the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's federal Clean Water Act of 1972.

"West Virginia isn't even talking about solutions yet," Collins said. "They're still talking about ways to document the problems."

The surveyors hope to begin receiving results of the questionnaire by September or October, Benson said.

Vandalism

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18. Nacho cheese and popcorn butter was dumped out in the concession stand and a cooler also was broken into, investigating sheriff's deputies said. The vandals caused as much as \$30,000 in damage to the football stadium facilities, school officials estimated.

The next morning, State Police crime scene investigators were tasked with recovering evidence of more vandalism at the Ninth Grade complex where windows in four, main entrance doors and panes of glass in the cafeteria and teacher's lounge nearby were broken. Repairing that damage was

take the candy and sodas from the concession stand, Bonifant said.

Along with video footage captured by security cameras in the ninth grade, police also were able to recover five "swabs" of blood from the stair railing leading to the press box where at least one of the culprits cut themselves while breaking a window to get inside. About 15 latent fingerprints were documented at the Ninth Grade complex.

The blood swabs were expected to be analyzed at the West Virginia State Police Forensics Laboratory in Charleston, where samples recovered from a separate