

**ATP PROJECT COVER PAGE TEMPLATE**

(Project Title)

**Marcellus Shale in Mountain Maryland: A Listening Project**

(Sub-Contract Grantee Name/Authorized Signatory/Address/Phone)

(This is not the same person as the ATP faculty director.)

**President Jonathan Gibraltar**

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(ATP project date)

**August 2014-May 2015**

(Date this document was submitted)

**June 15, 2014**

(Project director's name, title, telephone number, and email address)

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**ATP PROJECT TEMPLATE**

**(June 15, 2014, Deadline)**

**PROJECT FOCUS:**

Frostburg State University students will partner with members of the Savage River Watershed Association to engage in a listening project to assess and document local opinions and concerns regarding natural gas extraction in western Maryland.

**PROJECT DETAILS:****Course Number, Name, and Instructor:**

SOCI 350: Folklore in Appalachia- Dr. Kara Rogers Thomas (Fall)

SOCI 345: Sociology of the Environment- Dr. Kara Rogers Thomas (Spring)

**Community Partner:**

Savage River Watershed Association

**Need:** Provide a substantive statement regarding the need for this project, as agreed upon by you and the community partner. What problem(s) will you address and what solutions will you implement by working with the community partner?

The Savage River is a headwater tributary for the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay that includes both coldwater and highland streams. As Maryland's premier brook trout fishery, the Savage River has been identified as a conservation priority because it is one of the few watersheds that still contain intact populations of native brook trout in Maryland. Located mainly in Garrett County, the Savage River watershed occupies over 74,000 acres of mostly forested land in western Maryland. The Savage River and its tributaries are located in a sparsely populated area and flow through only a few communities, with a total of about 3000 residents. Lack of development in the watershed has allowed for the survival of brook trout and other species which are extremely sensitive to the impacts of many types of pollution and disturbance.

While the Savage River watershed maintains a high level of biological integrity, it is still very susceptible to a myriad of negative impacts including: acid mine drainage (AMD), storm water runoff, thermal pollution, sediment pollution, atmospheric deposition of acids and toxic metals, exotic invasive species, and extractive industries. While poised to contribute to economic revitalization in western Maryland, the extraction of natural gas also poses a potential threat to the watershed's continued vitality.

To date, the State of Maryland has taken a cautious approach to natural gas extraction along the Marcellus Shale, declaring a moratorium on drilling and appointing The Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission to engage in a systematic study of the industry's potential impact on Maryland and to determine a set of best practices for drilling. The commission is scheduled to wrap up its work by Fall 2014. While the moratorium has been in place, leases for drilling have been signed by a number of area residents and there is little doubt that drilling will ensue once the moratorium is lifted. Additionally, the construction of a natural gas export facility in Cove Point, Maryland, is increasing pressure on State and local officials to lift the moratorium.

While there has been vociferous debate over natural gas drilling in western Maryland, there has been no systematic effort to assess and document general public opinion. As one member of the Savage River Watershed Association (SRWA) stated, "I'm not even sure what my closest neighbors think of the issue. And that's something I'd like to know." Drawing inspiration from the success of similar listening projects in New York, the Van Etten Listening Project (VELP), Ohio, with Communities United for Responsible Energy (CURE), and Pennsylvania's Sullivan County and using resources available from the Listening Project (Rural Southern Voice For Peace) in Burnsville, North Carolina, The Marcellus Shale in Mountain Maryland Listening Project is designed to gauge public opinion by documenting the hopes and concerns of residents living in the Savage River Watershed in a fair and balanced manner using students trained to listen, record, and respect a full range of opinions and attitudes while avoiding imposing an agenda or opinion based approach to the topic. Conducted with an objective stance, active listening can build trust, foster community relations, and create a social environment more open to exploring new ideas, feelings, and solutions. Savage River Watershed Association seeks to understand citizens' awareness of their source waters and work with them to enhance protection. Marcellus shale extraction is just one potential threat to Western MD water quality and may or may not be perceived as a threat by citizens. Having a better understanding of local opinions on natural gas drilling and other issues of concern will assist the Savage River Watershed in developing techniques and processes to work more effectively in their communities. Moreover, the Listening Project will assist in increasing awareness of the Savage River Watershed's efforts in western Maryland, which could in turn build membership numbers in the organization.

SRWA's 2014 Workplan identifies strategic goals which align themselves with this project's goals. Included in this "alignment" are the following:

1. "Emphasize our work related to clean, safe water and develop a comprehensive plan to "organize" and build a larger base of more easily identified and engaged supporters using the engagement ladder, power building, and community organizing strategies."

2. Investigate the status of Source Water Protection Planning in the watershed/region and determine if this is a useful and strategic approach for organizing local constituencies and increasing support for resource protection within the watershed.

Clearly, the Listening Project, once clarified and refined, will aid greatly in working towards SRWA's strategic goals and assist SRWA to better understand citizens' views and concerns allowing SRWA to better develop problem solving strategies related to working with watershed residents and those impacted directly and indirectly by clean water for which Savage River and its tributaries are a source (City of Frostburg, Mount Savage, and George's Creek, in Allegany County.)

**Number and description of planned meetings with the community partner (meetings are a required component of the ATP):**

There will be a total of 9 meetings with Savage River Watershed Association representatives over the course of the 2014-2015 academic year, with 5 meetings in the Fall Semester and 4 meetings in the Spring.

Early September-Members of the Savage River Watershed Association will provide students with an overview of issues related to natural gas extraction and development and describe their work in the region. Students and Association members will identify project goals and begin developing questions.

Mid September- Students and members of the Savage River Watershed Association will attend a training conducted by individuals who have been involved in conducting successful listening projects on controversial topics. The goal of these sessions will be to instruct students on engaging in objective, non-agenda based listening projects.

September 20- Savage River Watershed Association Members and FSU students will do a pilot run of the listening project at the annual FSU Appalachian Festival. Results of this trial run will allow them to critique and improve their questions and approach.

Early October- Students will meet with Savage River Watershed Association Members to finalize questions and establish project parameters.

Late November- Students will present preliminary findings to Savage River Watershed Association members and identify project goals for the Spring Semester.

Early February- Members of the Savage River Watershed Association and FSU students who worked on the project in the Fall will provide students enrolled in SOCI 345 with an orientation to the project and training in objective Listening Project techniques.

Early March- Members of the Savage River Watershed Association and FSU students will finalize plans for the Spring Semester

April- Students and members of the Savage River Watershed will present their findings during FSU's annual "Focus Frostburg," an event highlighting Environmental Sustainability issues.

May- Students will meet with members of the Savage River Watershed to provide them with all the research materials they've collected and discuss "next step" ideas.

**Overview of the project, including its central focus (10-12 sentences):**

Frostburg State University students are partnering with the Savage River Watershed Association to conduct a Marcellus Shale in Mountain Maryland Listening Project. While a moratorium on natural gas drilling is currently in place in Maryland while the Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission completes an in-depth study on drilling and makes recommendations for best practices, numerous drilling leases have been signed and the expansion of the drilling industry in western Maryland seems imminent. Working in tandem with a number of other social and environmental organizations in the area, the Savage River Watershed Association is committed to ensuring that natural gas drilling can be done safely, mitigating dangers to the watershed while positively contributing to the local economy. Drawing inspiration from the success of similar projects in New York and Pennsylvania, this listening project is designed to objectively record public opinion on natural gas drilling by documenting the hopes and concerns of residents living in the Savage River Watershed. Students engaged in the project will be trained in objective listening practices to ensure neutrality. While there has been vociferous debate over natural gas drilling in western Maryland, there has been no systematic effort to assess and document general public opinion. While avoiding an agenda oriented approach, the project is intended to build trust, foster community relations, identify community values, and create a social environment more open to exploring new ideas, feelings, and solutions. Savage River Watershed Association seeks to understand citizens' awareness of their source waters and work with them to enhance protection. Marcellus shale extraction is just one potential threat to Western MD water quality and may or may not be perceived as a threat by citizens. Having a better understanding of local opinions on natural gas drilling and other issues of concern will assist the Savage River Watershed in developing techniques and processes to work more effectively in their communities. Moreover, the Listening Project will assist in increasing awareness of the Savage River Watershed's efforts in western Maryland, which could in turn build membership numbers for the organization. Finally, the project will encourage residents to become actively engaged

with gas extraction issues to ensure that safe drilling practices are enforced and practiced and that the vitality of our local watersheds remains intact and sustainable.

**Goals and Objectives:** Please use a bulleted or numbered list.

- Students will develop leadership skills and awareness of key community issues
- Students will learn how objective, active listening can build trust and strengthen community relations
- Students will be engaged as active learners and participants in community projects
- Students will engage in active research to assist a local organization in increasing awareness and visibility of their environmental efforts in the region

**PROJECT OUTCOMES:** In bulleted format, list all anticipated activities that meet the goals and objectives, including the poster, the conference presentation in Washington, D.C., and the required community presentation(s). Be sure that you have addressed all required goals, guidelines, and outcomes in the attached scope of work.

- Participation in and presentation at the December Appalachian Teaching Project gathering in Washington, DC.
- Development of poster documenting project that will be available at the DC Gathering and will be displayed at Mountain City Traditional Arts (a Frostburg venue) and additional public venues in Western Maryland.
- Participation in a poster session or panel discussion, or delivery of a formal paper at the Appalachian Studies Association's Annual Conference in March 2014.
- Participation in public program and discussion during Frostburg State University's "Focus Frostburg" sustainability symposium.
- Creation of transcriptions of survey results and data base for project to be shared with the Savage River Watershed- with a goal of surveying 150-200 watershed residents.

NOTE: Please use a consistent font throughout and please number pages.