

# WATERSHED WATCH

ST. MARY'S RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION  
PO Box 94, St. Mary's City, MD 20686

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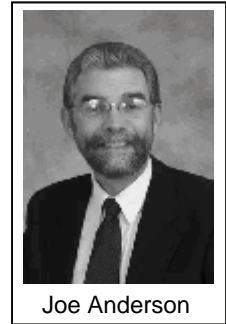
## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends of the St. Mary's River,  
I hope that you all are having a great summer! All the rain we've had so far certainly has been a blessing for the farmers and gardeners – this time last year it looked like the middle of August.

I want to take this opportunity to bring you up to speed on an exciting and important project that the St. Mary's River Watershed Association has embarked upon in partnership with St. Mary's County Government, St. Mary's College of Maryland, and with several local businesses. Over the next two years we will complete a Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS) for the St. Mary's River.

A WRAS is a comprehensive, natural resource-based prioritized action plan that states specific goals, objectives, and commitments to guide actions of the public, watershed

organizations, land trusts, and government to preserve and restore habitat and water quality in a watershed. Our WRAS will point out specific areas, issues, and actions that can result in measurable environmental improvements in the St. Mary's River watershed. The first step in developing the WRAS is to bring together all existing study data relating to natural resources and quality of life and then to update this information. This first phase, referred to as the "characterization" of the watershed, is currently underway. We have also established a steering committee for the project, that will meet on a monthly basis to provide input and comments. Informational meetings will be held periodically to keep the community informed about the project's progress and to answer questions and receive input. **[Continued page 2]**



Joe Anderson

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *RiverFest—Save the date! 10 AM to 5 PM, Sept. 27 at Historic St. Mary's City*
- *Join the SMRWA discussion group! Check us out at [www.SMRWA.org](http://www.SMRWA.org)*
- *WRAS Program Updates—go to [www.StMarysRiver.org](http://www.StMarysRiver.org)*

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## CHESAPEAKE BAY FUNDERS NETWORK AWARDS FOURTH CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT

For the fourth year in a row, St. Mary's River Watershed Association has been awarded a capacity building grant. In 2005 and 2006, SMRWA received \$10,000 awards from the Chesapeake Bay Trust. The Trust then reorganized the grant program bringing on funding partners and opening up the grant opportunity to watershed groups and Riverkeepers throughout the region. In 2007, SMRWA was included in the reorganized program with a cash award, training programs, networking opportunities, and technology support valued at more than \$25,000.

Again this year SMRWA has been awarded

more than \$25,000 with options for up to \$5,000 more in earmarked stipends. About three dozen other groups around the Bay enjoy the same support through the grant program with cash awards from just a couple thousand up to nearly \$100,000. A neighboring group, Patuxent Riverkeeper, is funded at about the same level as SMRWA and the larger group and one of our partners, Potomac Riverkeeper, is funded roughly three to four times higher. SMRWA monies will be used for a part time membership/volunteer coordinator, for staff and board development, for developing revenue diversity, and to open an office in Lexington Park.



## Greening Your Landscape

By Sonja Kubik

### [President's Letter from page 1]

The WRAS program is required under the Clean Water Act. Through the leadership of the St. Mary's River Watershed Association, St. Mary's County will be at the forefront in gaining compliance with federal laws, thereby establishing us as leaders in watershed planning and restoration in Maryland. This will give St. Mary's County an advantage over other jurisdictions in seeking public and private funding for watershed restoration projects. As you know, many government-financed and supported program have their critics, and this WRAS program is no exception. While some local residents declined to allow workers to survey streams located on their property, this will have little impact on the overall assessment of the waterways, and of course their wishes have been respected.

One concern voiced was that as a result of the WRAS, homeowners would be forced into strict compliance with environmental laws, into the greening of their properties, and into fines and restoration expenses that they cannot afford. This is emphatically not the case. While the WRAS documents and process will be completely transparent and an open public process, no part of the WRAS program will be enforcement related. It's important to note also that for every person who has come forward with concerns, we have had several more call or email in support for the WRAS program.

Our goal is to identify win-win solutions that will increase awareness of the need to foster greater environmental protections, and the identification of potential restoration projects that will result in enhanced quality of life in the St. Mary's River watershed, and indeed assure the sustainability of the watershed itself.

**[continued page 3, right column]**

**P**elargonic. Glyphosate. 2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic acid. If only the trouble with chemical fertilizers and pesticides ended with their unpronounceable ingredients. After fertilizers make their way into our streams, the nutrients within them behave as usual—by kicking plant growth into fast forward. However, rapid algae growth isn't the main problem: its death is. Decomposition requires a lot of oxygen, leaving insufficient quantities for fish and shellfish. And pesticides frighten in a whole other way, having been linked "to asthma, cancer, reduced fertility and neurological harm to fetuses, infants and children" (Zandonella). Luckily, going green doesn't mean your lawn won't be. Here are some tips:

- Replace chemical fertilizers with compost or organic lawn fertilizers
- Wait until grass is at least 3 inches tall before cutting (this builds a stronger root system that will require less watering and block sprouting weeds from the sun)
- Buy bamboo bird houses to attract insect-eating birds
- Keep animals away from your garden with a water-spraying scarecrow
- Use a dandelion weeder to remove deep-rooted weeds
- Give manual push-mowers a try!

\* \* \*

Another topic of concern is the

presence of non-native, or invasive, plant species. Non-native plants are less adapted than native plants and subsequently require more fertilizers, pesticides and water. Also, the absence of natural controls to their growth allows aggressive non-native plants to spread into communities of native plants. Most or all of the native plant species will disappear, resulting in a drastic reduction in diversity with consequences extending outwards to the insects and birds dependent on the now absent native plants.

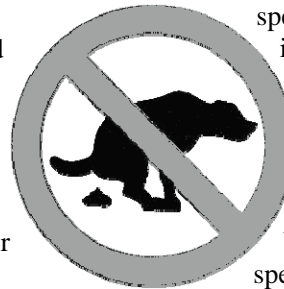
Unlike invasive plants, native species:

- Require less maintenance
- Aid in erosion control
- Reduce water run-off
- Provide habitat for native animal species

The Maryland Native Plant Society provides a list of invasive species (don't plant these!) and lists of native species by region that you can access at: <http://www.mdflora.org/index.html>

\* \* \*

The next area to begin green initiatives? Pet waste. Nobody dislikes it more than the environment. Rain washes unremoved pet waste into storm sewers, allowing it to enter waterways untreated. Once there, the pet waste decomposes and depletes oxygen, just like the decomposition of excessive algae does. Pet waste also contributes to rapid algae growth because of the nutrients it contains. Furthermore, pet waste can transmit



## Greening - continued from previous page



Organic vegetable patch in Park Hall.

diseases such as Campylobacteriosis, Salmonellosis, and Toxocariasis, each as unpleasant as its name.

So, your options:

- Seal it in a plastic bag and place in garbage (or use biodegradable BioBags available in pet stores)
- Flush it down the toilet
- Bury it in a 5” deep hole away from vegetable gardens
- Do not compost! (those harmful bacteria won’t die)

Now see how green you can make your home and backyard!

**Sources:**

- Cooperative Extension Service: University of Maryland College Park and University of Maryland Eastern Shore, “Are You Polluting Our Lakes and Streams and the Chesapeake Bay?” <http://www.agnr.umd.edu/CES/Pubs/PDF/FS703.pdf>
- Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning. <http://www.howardcountymd.gov/dpz/environment/environment.htm>
- Macmillan, Amanda. “Detoxing Green Velvet.” <http://www.thegreenguide.com/doc/114/detox>
- Maryland Department of the Environment <http://www.mde.state.md.us/>
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency <http://www.epa.gov/>
- Zandonella, Catherine. “Grass Roots: Easy Organic Lawn Care.”

**[President’s Letter from page 2]**

The WRAS program will launch a web site this summer: [www.StMarysRiver.org](http://www.StMarysRiver.org). The web site will be the first step in making this WRAS program transparent and will allow the public to participate in its completion. I encourage you to follow the progress of this project as we move forward. For more information, please contact us at [SMwatershed@yahoo.com](mailto:SMwatershed@yahoo.com).

Finally, on a sad note I’d like to express sorrow at the recent passing of Erik Jansson and deep appreciation for the many years that Erik worked so effectively with compassion, intelligence, and perseverance to help make St. Mary’s County a better place to live for us all. Erik was a good friend of the St. Mary’s River Watershed Association and someone who loved St. Mary’s County very much. He will be missed.

Sincerely,  
Joe Anderson, President

## Remembering Erik Jansson

1940 - 2008

“Environmentalist, scholar, author, ethicist, lecturer, leader, preservationist, humanist—all that. An incredibly industrious, determined, and successful advocate for the rights of everyday people.”

“Erik was a Leo . . . who take their responsibilities so seriously, they have to be dragged out of the office, handed a beer and fed dinner on the threat of bodily harm.”

“Erik was for me a stormy petrel—small, trim, and indomitable, a lonely spirit defying every tempest with unfeigned grace; to have him alight and visit was a rare privilege. . .this remarkable, unassuming champion.”

“Every now and then, someone like Erik Janssen comes along and insists on being the conscience of a system that otherwise would never dream of having one.”

“The forces of nature and people of the world lost a great friend and hero and the heavens gained a worthy comrade.”

“. . .Erik’s spirit soaring through the air, no longer carrying his earthly worries, now free to enjoy this wondrous planet. Soar high, dear Erik, and thank you for being you! In fondest memory and deep appreciation of Mother Nature’s loving son, Erik Torvald Jansson.”

—Bob Lewis, Eric Francis Coppelino, Carol Van Strum, Eric Francis Coppelino, Joe Stewart, David Shiah

### I would like to become a member of the SMRWA

Annual Membership Options	Price
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior	\$20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Student/Limited Income	\$10.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate <i>suggested</i>	\$500.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	_____

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I would like to become an active member/volunteer

Please make checks payable to:  
St. Mary’s River Watershed  
Association and mail this form  
along with your check to the  
address below:

PO Box 94  
St. Mary’s City, MD 20686

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone



**OUR MISSION**

To protect, improve, and promote the well-being of the St. Mary's River Watershed through the collaborative efforts of economic, agricultural, environmental, social, cultural, and political stakeholders in the community.

**We're on the web!**  
[www.smrwa.org](http://www.smrwa.org)

**SAVE THE DATE!**

Saturday, Sept. 27  
 10 AM until 5 PM  
 Historic St. Mary's City  
FREE ADMISSION



**RiverFest 2008**  
*A Celebration of the St. Mary's River*

- Live Music—Piney Point Playboys, Indian Summer, & Dance Hall Ghost
- Games, prizes, foods, & drinks
- Kayaking, seining, touch-tanks
- Great fun for every age: children's hour at noon with special entertainment by Magpie
- Exhibits, vendors, & demonstrations
- Free Skipjack rides (1st come, 1st served)

