

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,

Spring has arrived to the St. Mary's.

Mallards are nesting, blue crabs are marching up the Bay, rockfish have returned to spawn, the shad bush is blooming, and oysters are doing what they do so well, gently cleanings the river.

It's also time to celebrate our annual rite of spring, "A River Affair," and pause a bit from some fruitful spring labor. And we have much to celebrate. Our Association's membership continues to grow. Many of you recently joined us in our annual spring river cleanup and helped remove thousands of pounds of trash from the river. Many others helped to install our first rain garden which will help remove nutrients from the river and assist with its restoration, one backyard at a time. And through the hard work of our peerless executive director, Bob Lewis, we've received several restoration grants to help us reach our goal of getting the St. Mary's removed from the EPA's impaired rivers list.

A River Affair will take place overlooking Calvert Creek at beautiful

Woodlawn Farm in Ridge, Maryland from 1 to 4 PM on Sunday, May 20th. Please join us for an afternoon of excellent food and drink, music, and friendship. During our silent auction please bid on original works of art, jewelry, pottery, and sculpture donated by local artisans and on exciting trips and unique items contributed by friends and community businesses.

This year we will also acknowledge the lifetime work of Senator Bernie Fowler to restore the Bay and her rivers. Bernie is one of my heroes and is a true hero of the Chesapeake. His legendary efforts are worthy of poetry and song.

Tickets for A River Affair are only \$60 and can be purchased online at www.SMRWA.org or by mailing your check to us.

So be a little daring this spring and have an "Affair" with us. We promise we won't tell....

See you on the river,

Joe Anderson
President



Joe Anderson

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *A River Affair Fundraiser—1 to 4 PM, May 20 at Woodlawn in Ridge*
- *MGO Cage Collection—June 17 through June 23*
- *RiverFest—SAVE THE DATE! 11 AM to 5 PM, October 13, at Historic St. Mary's City*

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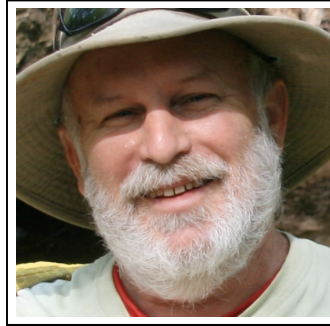
Oysters & Crabs Make Comeback

Preliminary reports on the state's fall oyster "dredge" survey indicate that 2011 had the lowest mortality rate in nearly two decades. Spat strike was also higher than average Bay-wide, but the spat strike was well below normal in the St. Mary's River. Spat strike varies greatly from year to year.

The winter crab survey also provided encouraging results, with the total count more than double last year's count and three times high than the yearly average. Crabs have the ability to rebound quickly when harvest quotas are reduced. In 2013, we can expect quotas to be relaxed a bit.

E.D.'s Corner—Department of the Economics

Optimism is now the order of the day for many state and federal officials as they ponder the reality of Chesapeake Bay restoration. The winter crab survey was the highest in nineteen years. The fall oyster “dredge” survey revealed survival rates not seen since the late '80s. Breeding populations of oysters expanded to areas where natural spat strike had not been recorded in over a decade. The rockfish “young-of-the-year” survey was equally impressive, and while not a record, it revealed that rockfish stocks are holding their own. Yet local officials are reluctant to ride the optimism train. Why?



They are not alone. Several agencies are suing the EPA to stop the Bay clean-up. Plaintiffs in the case are Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, The Fertilizer Institute, National Pork Producers Council, National Corn Growers Association, National Chicken Council, U.S. Poultry & Egg Association, National Turkey Federation, and the National Association of Home Builders. They allege that the EPA's plan to clean up the Bay is based on faulty science, that the proposed plan exceeds EPA's authority, and that the plan puts an unfair burden on farmers.

Furthermore, the American Farm Bureau, who has joined the plaintiffs in *Pennsylvania Farm Bureau v. EPA*, has endorsed a congressional pursuit to limit EPA's powers. (Reminiscent of when President George W. Bush, under Dick Cheney's advice, declared mining to be exempt from the Clean Water Act and environmental laws...)

For the plaintiffs and for our local officials, the real reason is much simpler. They say the Bay clean up is going to cost too much. We're talking hundreds of millions of dollars over the next thirteen years for St. Mary's County alone! (Nobody is mentioning a Bay-wide cost—but twenty billion is a decent guess.) Farmers, builders, and public officials are resisting the need to pay to clean up the Chesapeake Bay. “Too expensive—it will affect our bottom line.” But can we afford not to?

A University of Maryland study (1989) of the potential economic value of a healthy Chesapeake Bay indicated a return to regional economy of \$678 BILLION, mostly from recreational water activities and commercial fisheries. With inflation, that number now exceeds \$1 trillion in annual economic value. For today's polluted Chesapeake (and it's report card dropped in 2011), we're tapping into less than 10% of our Bay's economic potential.

It's a simple commitment. The Chesapeake clean-up is not only the ethical thing to do, it's the right thing to do so that our region can prosper for generations to come.

See you on the river!

Bob Lewis
Executive Director

News Briefs

Former staffer, **Lindsay Tempin** is currently defending her masters thesis at the University of Maryland, but she continues to find time to volunteer for SMRWA, most recently as the leader of the fourth annual St. Mary's River Clean-Up and as co-leader for a 2nd-grade Charter School field trip to St. Mary's Lake.

Student intern **Allison Rugila** was recently promoted to Program Director and will be working full time throughout the coming summer.

Executive Director **Bob Lewis** recently completed coursework and exams for a “Green Card,” and is certified for storm water management and oversight at development sites.

Staffers **Rugila and Lewis** joined members **Becki Wolf and Rebecca Stump** for the annual Stream Waders training at Jug Bay in order to participate in the Maryland Biological Stream Survey. Last month along with members **Bob Boxwell and Rob Chapman** they collected more than thirty samples from southern Maryland streams.

Lewis mentored Forrest Tech Center student **Ethan Johnson** on his senior project surveying, mapping, and filming Horseshoe Oyster Bar in preparation for a multi-year restoration project.



News Briefs

Maryland DNR has shelved applications for **aquaculture bottom leases** in the St. Mary's River Oyster Sanctuary pending development of more comprehensive criteria for determining compatibility of aquaculture and sanctuary restoration goals.

Nineteen volunteers installed a **rain garden** at the St. Inigoes home of members Bill Edgerton and Bonnie Green, thereby reducing pollution from runoff. The event raised nearly \$1000 for SMRWA.

Maryland Department of the Environment and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have issued **permits** to SMRWA to build a three-dimensional oyster reef on five acres in front of St. Mary's College, under a partnership with several Rotary Clubs, Rotary District #7620. and St. Mary's College of Maryland.

In April, nineteen volunteers removed 31 tires, an air conditioner, a tricycle, two road signs, and more than 800 pounds of loose trash from our river during the fourth annual **St. Mary's River Clean-Up**.

Thirty-seven **2nd-graders from the Chesapeake Public Charter School** attended a day-long field trip to St. Mary's Lake where they learned about streamside habitats and inhabitants, and threats to the ecosystem.

Lewis continues to be an active participant in St. Mary's County's WIP Team and the development of the **Watershed Implementation Plan** (known as the WIP2), which will inform the local effort to clean up the Chesapeake Bay and tributaries.

Forrest Tech Center teacher, **John Spinicchia**, and local businessperson and playwright, **Trish Cole**, were elected to the SMRWA Board of Directors at the Annual Members Meeting in January. Departing the board is **Dave Waring** who served since SMRWA's founding in 2004. We are grateful for his dedication and service throughout the past eight years. Hats off to Dave!!



Rain Garden installation in St. Inigoes reduces polluted run-off.



Fourth Annual St. Mary's River Clean-Up nets thirty-one tires.



Second-graders from the Chesapeake Charter School learn about the life stages of aquatic insects.

New Faces—Student Interns



David Wood is entering his junior year at St. Mary's College of Maryland where he majors in biology and is a member of the Nitze Scholars program. He founded the "Keep St. Mary's Beautiful" campaign to pick up trash weekly on campus. He is a SMRP Ed team coordinator, student member of the St. Mary's Arboretum Association, and active participant in the "Green Roofs on Campus" campaign.

David will be working with SMCM alumnus Paul Sturm (Ridge to Reefs Inc.) in developing and piloting a rewards program for neighborhoods, and in advocating for septic systems upgrades for waterfront homes.

With matching funding from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Small Watersheds Grant, this ten-week full-time position will officially launch the Lindsey Paul Rudolph Memorial Student Internship.



Paula Riner is a familiar face since she currently serves on SMRWA's board of directors. Paula is entering her senior year at St. Mary's College of Maryland where she majors in biology with minors in environmental studies and music. This coming June and July, Paula will be working at several different farms pursuing experience and knowledge of sustainable agricultural practices, in preparation for her senior thesis.

Paula's many talents include the ability to run an oyster hatchery. She worked closely with SMCM alumnus Mandy Burch at Morgan State Hatchery on the Patuxent River to successfully breed and strike spat for use in the oyster aquaculture industry.

In August, with funding from Boeing and Rotary Clubs of Leonardtown, Lexington Park, and College Park, Paula will lead a nursery program at the College waterfront with the goal of producing two million spat-on-shell for planting in the St. Mary's River oyster sanctuary.



Bobby Witkop is entering his second-year at St. Mary's College of Maryland where he studies biology and excels on the swim team. He is a working ocean lifeguard and that is where he will spend most of his summer. But for the next five weeks, Bobby will be assisting SMRWA with general operations and program planning.

Bobby's hobbies include fishing, sailing, and, in general, interacting with the natural world. His passion is to see people respect the environment. Bobby is a participant in SMRWA's Marylander's Grow Oysters program (he has four cages) and actively participated last September in the MGO cage refill and distribution.

Bobby brings his enthusiasm and a sense of urgency to SMRWA's work. We look forward to working with him this spring, and in years to come.

Lindsey Paul Rudolph Memorial Student Internship Launched

A powerful teacher, a team leader, an innovator, and a dedicated environmentalist, Lindsey Paul Rudolph exercised respect for our natural world and its inhabitants. She was a member of, volunteer for, and donor to the SMRWA. Her dedication to service and her commitment to change set her apart from her peers. We miss Lindsey, who left us in March 2009 as a result of an automobile accident.

As we launch the Lindsey Paul Rudolph Memorial Internship, it is only fitting that we have awarded this position to a young man who is also dedicated to service and committed to change. Lindsey's shoes are indeed big shoes to fill, but we are excited to announce that David Wood will be the inaugural recipient. We hope that David will reflect on Lindsey's accomplishments during her short but exciting life, and that those reflections will inspire and motivate him.

Grants—Boeing, NFWF, CBT, CBFN, Rotary Clubs, CEG, DNR



For the fifth year in a row, **Boeing Global Corporate Citizenship** has awarded \$20,000 for oyster restoration in the St. Mary’s River sanctuary. Funds will be used to set up a nursery operation at St. Mary’s College to strike two to four million spat for planting in the river, to seed a reef ball manufacturing and restoration project with local youth groups and schools, and to continue monitoring restoration efforts throughout the 1,289-acre sanctuary.

The SMRWA has been awarded \$80,000 from the **National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Small Watershed Grant**, to install low-impact development devices (LIDs) at model homes in partnership with developers, to design and implement a neighborhood rewards program, and to engage waterfront homeowners in upgrades for their septic system.

A \$34,606 award from the **Chesapeake Bay Trust Community Engagement Grant** program will fund a survey and analysis of LIDs offered as add-ons in new homes as well as buyer willingness to purchase LIDs. A marketing program will be developed and piloted, which will alter the buyers’ behavior in favor of LID homes. (hopefully)

The **Chesapeake Bay Funders Network** awarded \$75,000 to \$90,000 in cash, training, and services to support organizational capacity building over the next three years. Funds will be used to hire additional staff, expand implementation of watershed restoration projects, and refine technological support systems.

A \$3,500 award from **Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources** will continue the Marylanders Grow Oysters program for the fourth consecutive year.

A \$9,000 award from the **Rotary Clubs of Leonardtown, Lexington Park, and College Park** will provide for planning and design and launch a funding campaign for an oyster restoration project on five acres in front of St. Mary’s College. Specifically, this seed money will fund 1) the research and design of a three-dimensional oyster reef system, 2) a reef implementation plan, 3) an outreach and education plan and 4) reimbursement for expenses incurred to apply for and receive permits for the ensuing project.

Constellation Energy Group Foundation awarded a \$4,000 **EcoStar Grant** (Boeing match) to fund a comprehensive youth program restoring oyster habitat in the St. Mary’s River. Youth groups are sought to engage in manufacturing reef balls followed by excursions to the shoreline to learn about oyster culture and witness their restoration efforts first hand.

I would like to become a member of the SMRWA

Annual Membership Options	Price
<input type="checkbox"/> Guardian	\$1,003.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Steward	\$303.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Friend	\$103.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$35.00
<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: _____

I prefer an electronic newsletter.

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

SMRWA
PO Box 94
St. Mary’s City, MD 20686

Name _____

Address _____

Email Address _____

Phone _____



Donate
Online!

www.SMRWA.org



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

Upcoming Events: *A River Affair*

- A River Affair—Sunday, May 20 from 1 to 4 PM at Woodlawn in Ridge, Maryland - Tickets \$60 <http://www.smrwa.org/>
- Rain Garden Hands-On Workshop—Saturday in May or June?? TBA—watch for details (We need your help!)
- MGO Cage Collection—June 17 through 23; remote hosts can deliver cages to the college on Saturday, June 23 from 8 until noon
- Oyster Planting—Tuesday, June 26 from 9 AM until noon at Muldoon River Center. Come watch the fun!
- Governor's Cup—Saturday, August 4 from 10 AM to 4 PM at the Muldoon River Center. See the oyster nursery in action!
- MGO Cage Distribution—TBA for a Saturday morning in September (likely Sept. 22)
- **RiverFest 2011**—October 13 from 11AM to 5 PM at Historic St. Mary's City, *FREE ADMISSION*

A River Affair
 Sunday, May 20
 Get your tickets today!
www.smrwa.org