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# WATERSHED WATCH

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

November 28, 2017

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## Celebrate Giving Tuesday

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St. Mary's River Watershed  
Association  
PO Box 94  
St. Mary's City, MD 20686



St. Mary's River Watershed Association, a Maryland non-profit, works tirelessly to enhance the health and enjoyment of the St. Mary's River. Funded primarily through membership dues and individual donations, the Association restores river bottom habitat, installs storm water control devices, and educates school and youth groups, local businesses, community members, volunteers, and interns. Our Future Bay Leaders program is unique and highly successful in engaging youth in conservation related work making a lasting impression on their future pursuits in education and employment.

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Annual Meeting  
Miller Challenges State and Locals  
to Restore the Upper St. Mary's as Part of  
400-Year Centennial Celebration

Dr. Henry Miller delighted about 50 attendees at the Association's annual

meeting on Saturday November 18. Covering nearly 3000 years of oyster culture, beginning with the ancient Greeks' belief in the oyster's ability to enhance libido and the Romans first commercial operations growing oysters in controlled environments, and ending with today's plight of the few remaining wild oysters, Miller depicted the oyster as a key organism in our economic and dietary history. Honing in on details Miller said that Europeans have always eaten their oysters raw, where Americans tend to prefer them cooked—an art learned most likely from natives Americans.



Miller described the "gold rush" mentality of 19th century watermen who traveled the Bay to harvest wild oysters before they were depleted. Relating the story of a journalist aboard a buy boat in 1911 as they steered into the mouth of Breton Bay, Miller said, "it looked like the lights of a city, but as they pushed up the Bay they realized they were seeing the lights of more than 500 anchored vessels waiting for morning light to begin harvesting more oysters."

Miller ended with a challenge, saying "Of all the waterways on which America's original 13 colonies were founded, only one still retains some sense of its original appearance – that of Maryland. Like the others, the health and fertility of the St. Mary's River has undergone dramatic decline due to human actions. But unlike them, the St. Mary's River is the one that has the greatest possibility of being successful restoration in the early 21st century. This is of great relevance because Maryland is fast approaching a highly significant achievement—its 400th birthday in 2034."



Miller called for the restoration of oysters in the upper St. Mary's River, including "St. Mary's Bay" and Horseshoe Bend. He also suggested that non-tidal streams could host more wetlands, especially the area in Great Mills where dams and mills were once common. While just 17 years from today, Miller said that the centennial celebration could be a turning point for the St. Mary's River and for the Chesapeake Bay.

"Repairing the ecological damage of the past is a noble and significant

undertaking but it also offers economic benefits," Miller wrote in his proposal, "Within a few years, the St. Mary's River will again be a prime source of high quality, pollution free Maryland oysters."



#### OUR MISSION

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

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