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For Immediate Release [photos attached]  
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## Stewards convene for planting despite rain and mud

More prevalent than the ubiquitous mud, the enthusiasm of twenty-eight dedicated naturalists eclipsed the dark clouds and misty rains last Saturday.

“Everyone had a great time. There was not one person who uttered a complaint,” said Joe Anderson who serves as chair of the board for the St. Mary’s River Watershed Association.

“I’m sixty-six and I just planted 33 trees,” boasted Patricia Dunlap.

Dunlap, a graduate of the University of Maryland Master Gardeners program, served as one of the consultants for the Association-led reforestation project on newly acquired St. Mary’s College of Maryland land in St. Mary’s City. The idea for a reforestation project came to Association Executive Director Bob Lewis as he attended one of the college’s Capital Design Advisory committee meetings this past fall.

“It seemed to me that the emphasis was being placed on differences of opinion between the college and the community. In reality, there is more agreement than disagreement,” said Lewis. “I wanted to get us all on the same page.”

Lewis approached officials at the college with plans to plant 250 native trees on a lot that was left bare after the abandoned mobile home and outbuildings were razed. The Association served as the hub around which the college and community came together. Master gardeners were called in to give advice on how best to restore the site to its natural state. Local nursery Indian Bridge Farms donated trees. The Maryland Conservation Corps provided additional expertise and labor on the morning of the planting. College students and community members filled out the ranks. More than 215 trees were planted in less than two and a half hours in cold and soggy conditions.

“We’re not done. We have more trees to go in and broom sedge grass seed will be planted. Trash on the site will be collected too,” said Lewis. “We did what the college would have done anyway, but we did it with volunteers, we saved tax dollars, and we brought people together.”

Anyone wanting to help with this or other St. Mary’s River Watershed Association projects can call Lewis at 301-737-2903 or email [info@StMarysRiver.org](mailto:info@StMarysRiver.org). At 9 AM Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, Lewis will meet with volunteers for the first annual St. Mary’s River Clean-Up. Bring your boat and paddling gear to the Great Mills Canoe/Kayak Launch. Gloves and garbage bags will be provided.

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[Caption for photo dogwood.jpg – “In memory of member and volunteer, Lindsey Paul Rudolph, the St. Mary’s River Watershed Association planted one white dogwood tree at the front of the reforestation site.”]

[Caption for photo planting.jpg – Twenty-eight volunteers convene for a morning of tree planting, donuts, and camaraderie.]