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Third-Annual Spring Cleaning of the St. Mary's River Nets Canoe Loads of Trash

Volunteers paddled the St. Mary's River Water Trail on a cloudy morning pulling 12 tires, 20 bags of trash and recyclables, and 500 lbs of loose trash from a chilly St. Mary's River between Great Mills Canoe/Kayak Launch and St. Mary's College of Maryland on Saturday, April 9, 2011. Seventeen volunteers helped give the river a much needed spring cleaning during the 3rd Annual St. Mary's River Cleanup.

"Last year on the same stretch of river, volunteers collected a similar amount of trash. This is because every time it rains trash along the road gets washed into our streams and makes its way downstream," said Lindsay Tempinson, St. Mary's River Watershed Association Program Director. "We are thankful for all the hard work of the volunteers. I think they would have gathered even more trash if it would have fit in their canoes."

In addition to the tires, volunteers found dozens of beverage containers, approximately 50 plastic bags, children's toys, several metal barrels, a suit case, an open house banner, a propane canister, two car steering wheels, and a trash can.

"People are always surprised at the things they find in the river," said Tempinson.



Seventeen volunteers pulled 12 tires, 20 bags of trash and recyclables, and 500 lbs. of loose trash from the St. Mary's River on April 9, 2011. From left standing: Andy Shaw, James Waltz, Paula Riner, Matt Silliman, Maddie Alpert, Patrick Murphy, Mike Vargesco, Robb Kirchner; From left in front: Hailey Findley, Kevin Findley, Bob Lewis, John Giusti, John Hanson, Lindsay Tempinson. Also, volunteering were Jean Murphy, Merideth Taylor and Elaine Szymkowiak. (photo by Jean Murphy)

The St. Mary's River Cleanup is hosted by the St. Mary's River Watershed Association (<http://www.smrwa.org>), and is part of the Alice Ferguson Foundation's 23rd Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup, http://www.fergusonfoundation.org/trash_initiative/trash_cleanup.shtml. There were 422 cleanup sites in Maryland, Washington DC, Virginia, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. As of 11 a.m. April 10, with just one-fourth of the sites reporting, volunteers had collected 21,062 cigarette butts, 431 tires, 13,215 plastic bags, 58.4 tons of loose trash, and 59,400 recyclable beverage containers from the Potomac River Watershed.



Trash and litter has negative effects in many areas of life in the region:

- It harms wildlife;
- costs taxpayers precious funds for cleanup and removal;
- is a public health threat by increasing breeding grounds for virus carrying insects and rodents;
- decreases property values;
- and hurts businesses, recreation, and tourism.



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Eight-year-old Hailey Findley and father Kevin with a large trash can and other trash pulled from the St. Mary's River on April 9, 2011 during the 3rd Annual St. Mary's River Cleanup. (photo by Jean Murphy)



Matt Silliman (left) and Andy Shaw with a canoe load of trash pulled from the St. Mary's River on April 9, 2011 during the 3rd Annual St. Mary's River Cleanup. (photo by Jean Murphy)

Andy Shaw (left) and Bob Lewis load trash pulled from the St. Mary's River on April 9, 2011 into a truck during the 3rd Annual St. Mary's River Cleanup. (photo by Mike Vargesco)



More photos can be viewed at:

<http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=57432&id=1804707338&l=5788e86320>