

***** PRESS RELEASE *****

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Boeing funds oyster restoration for third year

St. Mary's City—Early in the morning last September 10th, twenty-two St. Mary's College students gathered at the Muldoon River Center with a dozen community volunteers to release one million baby oysters into the St. Mary's River. That event marked the second year in a row that Boeing Charitable Corporate Citizenship, the foundation arm of The Boeing Company, provided the largest share of funding for oyster restoration projects in the upper St. Mary's River.

“The Boeing Company has been an excellent partner to the St. Mary's River Watershed Association since 2006,” commented Association president Joe Anderson. “Through Boeing's ongoing generosity, including this latest award of \$20,000, they've been instrumental in establishing the St. Mary's River Oyster Sanctuary, and in helping us to achieve our goal of restoring Maryland's river—the St. Mary's River, one of the most beautiful and historic rivers in the country.”



Oysters are filter feeders and can remove algae and pollutants from the water column and then deposit those sediments on the river bottom. An adult oyster can filter 55 gallons of water each day. While the baby oysters will need to grow another two or three years before reaching adult size, they are already filtering and cleaning the St. Mary's River, albeit a bit more slowly. It takes about 250 dime-size spat to filter the amount of water that one adult oyster can filter. With each new oyster placed into the St. Mary's River the water becomes cleaner.

The St. Mary's River Watershed Association hopes to deploy twelve million oysters into the St. Mary's River by 2015. Already the Association has placed two and one-half million baby oysters on six sites within the oyster sanctuary. Clean water is the Association's ultimate goal and oyster restoration is one of several methods the Association is pursuing. Over the past two weeks, the Association has conducted surveys of previous oyster plantings.

“Generally, the oysters are doing very well. Mortality is about 17%,” said Bob Lewis, who serves as the organization's executive director. “Today more than two million surviving, growing oysters are filtering approximately 19 million gallons of water every day.”

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“Boeing is committed to working with local communities in support of positive change,” said local Boeing community investor Oscar Ocasio. “Environmental programs that minimize impacts on the environment and reduce pollution are aligned with our core corporate values and efforts that we seek to support. We are thrilled to be able to make this grant available to the St. Mary’s River Watershed Association—an organization committed to restoring the health of the St. Mary’s River.”



“A clean St. Mary's River will assure that future generations in the Mother County will enjoy a productive, safe, and beautiful resource,” Anderson added. “The Boeing Company has our thanks and the thanks of everyone in St. Mary's County.”

Now it’s time for the oysters to do their job—cleaning the waters of the St. Mary’s River.

For more information, contact us at info@stmarysriver.org or visit our web site at <http://www.smrwa.org>.



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