

PRESS RELEASE

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Watershed group to present to commissioners

St. Mary's River under stress

The St. Mary's River Watershed Association will present the *State of the River* report to the county commissioners on Tuesday, October 23rd in room 14 of the Governmental Center. The agenda time is 10 AM and the presentation will be carried live on TV cable channel 95. Presenters will include Association president Joe Anderson, Distinguished Professor of Biology Robert Paul, and St. Mary's County environmental planner Sue Veith.

"In several locations, the St. Mary's River is showing signs of degraded health—mostly in the form of increased bank and streambed erosion probably caused by greater flushes of storm water from impervious surfaces in the Lexington Park area," said Dr. Robert Paul.

Maryland Geological Survey gauge readings in the main stem of the non-tidal river indicate that average stream flow has been slowly rising over the past fifteen years. Paul suspects that this increased flow is a result of the urban growth in the Lexington Park development district.

"As we build more buildings, roads, and parking lots, less and less of the rain that falls on the area is absorbed into the ground," Paul added noting that the rainwater flows instead into drainage ditches and small tributaries leading into the river system.

The Association continues to look for ways to improve storm water management in new developments and in retrofitting old devices currently in place. The Maryland General Assembly passed legislation last winter [HB786], which is intended to completely rewrite the state's storm water control requirements.

"We're not trying to stop development," commented Association President Joe Anderson, "we just need to find a way to make that development friendly to the river." Anderson noted a town-house residential project proposed for just south of Great Mills Road behind Lore's Laundromat. "We met with the developer and we were very encouraged by the extensive use of cutting-edge rainwater management tools. The proposed project will have garden rooftops, growing facades with window boxes collecting and storing water not used by the roof garden, and parking areas made with tiles that will allow rain to be absorbed into the ground. It's a win-win for everyone."

For additional information about the *State of the River* address, visit <http://www.smrwa.org/>.

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