



# WATERSHED WATCH

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

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 1  
APRIL 2010

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT—

Dear Friends of the St. Mary's River,

Hello to everyone, and a heartfelt welcome back to our harbingers of spring, the osprey. They've returned like clockwork to our river and creeks and have set to work repairing and building their nests on high watchtowers overlooking our river and her tributaries.

I think they would be pleased to know that during their winter sojourn in South America, while congress was working hard to adopt a health care bill, that we have also been hard at work on a health care plan of our own for the St. Mary's River.

Under the watchful eye of more than 150 volunteers, hundreds of thousands of young oysters are growing steadily under 88 piers throughout the St. Mary's River as part of the Marylanders Grow Oysters program. These oysters are destined to move to their new home in the St. Mary's River Oyster Sanctuary, which pending final approval, we believe will be located in the river extending from St. Mary's College north past Tippetty Witchity Island.

We owe a debt of thanks to our Governor Martin O'Malley, and to Department of Natural Resources Secretary John Griffin, for their leadership in championing the oyster sanctuary and aquaculture initiative throughout the Chesapeake Bay.

As our oysters grow and increase in number, together with the osprey we will watch the St. Mary's River gradually transform to cleaner waters, alive with more fish for the ospreys (and fishermen), more crabs and oysters for the watermen (and us), and a healthier river for everyone.

Restoring the health of the St. Mary's River and the Chesapeake Bay is a daunting task, but as with any worthwhile journey, it must begin with that all important first step. And, as with many of these journeys, each must begin in our own backyard.

Onward to a healthy St. Mary's River!

Sincerely,  
Joe Anderson  
President



Joe Anderson

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *RiverFest—Save the date!*  
10 AM to 5 PM, Sept. 25 at  
Historic St. Mary's City
- *Join the SMRWA discussion group!* Check us out at  
[www.SMRWA.org](http://www.SMRWA.org)

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## HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

If there is a red dot on your mailing label, then your membership has expired. In these times of economic uncertainty, your membership dues are more important than ever. We no longer have grant-funding to support our newsletter, and have to cut back on printing and postage costs.

Please visit our Web site to donate online, or fill out the form in this newsletter and mail it to us with your donation.



## Oyster Sanctuaries

Sanctuary boundaries for dissemination of oysters currently in the care of volunteer growers in the St. Mary's River has not been finalized, although it is most likely to be located near St. Mary's College of Maryland and extend to Tippity Witchity Island.

There are several proposed bills in the Maryland Senate, such as Senate Bill 342, that would postpone the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) from creating new oyster sanctuaries until April 2011 or even all together. We are confident that despite this opposition, our oysters will have a place of quality river bottom to call home beginning in the summer.

For more information on legislation related to oysters visit the MDNR Legislative Update web page <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/fisheries/regulations/legislativeupdate.asp> or search via the Maryland General Assembly <http://mlis.state.md.us/mgaweb/google.aspx>

Please contact your representatives to let your voice be heard!



*Oysters being distributed to volunteer growers.*

## Boeing Funds Oyster Restoration

Boeing Global Corporate Citizenship awarded the St. Mary's River Watershed Association a \$10,000 grant to support the restoration of oysters in the St. Mary's River. Boeing representative and local community investor, Oscar Ocasio, facilitated the grant negotiations. The Association plans to utilize the funds to create better oyster habitat, to educate the public about the benefits of oyster restoration, and to support additional efforts to restore oysters in the St. Mary's River and her tributaries.

## St. Mary's River Oyster Grower Volunteers

Andy & Sandy Anderson	William Dorsey	Debbie Hitchcock	Liz Reisman
Joe Anderson & Jane Rowe	Jim Doussard	Richard Holden & Susan Nash	David & Diane Reumont
Sue Ann & Dan Armitage	Larry Drell	Chip & Emily Jackson	Scott & Lisa Rickard
Philip Barber	Jack Duchesne	Alex Kampf	Jay Rodgers
Bobbi & Kevin Bell	Carlos Falcon	Bruce & Suellen Keiner	Bob & Barbara Rumpier
Becky & Fred Benton	George & Janet Fiackos	Andy Keppel	Jack & Viki Russell
Kara Benton	Judy Fillius & Gary Schubert	Tara & Bip Kimball	Lester & Mary Ryan
Steve & Maurine Bernard	Barry Friedman	Kathy & Al Lacer	Jeff Aksteter & Laura Shaklee
Kara & Steve Bieshelt	Bill & Kathryn Fry	Keith Lavender	Steve Snyder
Blu Haven Piers	John Fulchiron	Tom & Joan Lawrence	Bob & Joan Stammerjohn
Dick & Kathy Bos	John & Karen Garner	Bob Lewis & Merideth Taylor	Tamara Strouth & Steve Nickle
Pat Bowling	Will Gates	Tom & Amy Magyar	Dan Sweeney
Barbara Bowman & Dan Greene	Ben Gilbert	Cathy Ray & Paul Matthai	Chris Tanner & Jean Illingworth
Larry & Margaret Brabec	John Giusti & Sherry Stanley	Tom & Danielle Moulds	Reg Townsend
Craig & Bette Bumgarner	Bonnie Green	Jean, Patrick, Peter,	Dave & Linda Vert
Jim & Judy Carr	Trish Cole & Susan Grier	Sydney & Tyler Murphy	Jackie & Fred Victor
Dick & Sharon Chadwick	Kathy Grimes	Kevin & Teresa Newbold	Sally Vincent
Bill, Ricky, & Adam Chesser	Bob Groat	Jim & Karen Nutter	Larry & Jeannie Vote
John Paradis Jr. and Lani Clark	Jim & Suzanne Hardin	Reg Overman	Adam & Amy Werblow
Ed & Pat Cole	Jim Haskell	Rich & John Paradis	Mike & Nancy Williams
Sharon & James Cullison, Jr.	Larry Haskell	Nick & Cynthia Parker	Gary & Linda Williams
Fred & Betty Czarra	Jerry & Linda Himmelheber	Tim & Jennifer Raley	Kathy Cummings & Ned Wolfe
Neal Dieudonne	Alan Hinkle	Bill Reed	

For more information, visit: <http://www.oysters.maryland.gov/>

Thank you for all your help!

## Update: Marylanders Grow Oysters

Six-hundred cages filled with oyster spat on shell were distributed to more than 90 volunteers in September. Winter is nearing an end, and as the weather warms the oysters will resume growing. The oysters are now more than seven-months old.

Many volunteers sent in survey reports on the growth and counts of their oysters in November and December. Counts were variable, depending on location and number of shells, but most volunteers reported a few hundred spat and an average size between a half and one inch in diameter. Surveys will be requested again prior to collection.

Collection of cages is planned for early summer, and we are currently seeking Creek Captains to help with collection. In late summer, cages will be refilled and distributed to volunteers.

If you are interested in joining or continuing to volunteer for the Marylanders Grow Oysters program in the Fall of 2010, please contact us to learn more. Volunteers are expected to care for oysters for one year by keeping the cages clean, adjusting the depth of cages during extreme tide events, and monitoring the overall condition of spat.



*Bob Lewis inspecting spat growth.*



*A cluster of oyster spat in early December.*

### Did you know that oysters change sex?

Young oysters are mostly male, but at about two-to-three years of age most become female.

## SMRWA Meets with Watermen

In February, SMRWA organized a meeting with local watermen, representatives from Marylanders Grow Oysters, college students and museum staff, a scientist, and St. Mary's County Commissioner President Jack Russell. The group agreed that oyster restoration in the St. Mary's River is vital for clean water, that oyster bars are essential to thriving underwater habitats, and that watermen are important economic and cultural assets in our community—their livelihood should be preserved. The group disagreed on the value of “cultivating” oyster bars with dredges. Everyone departed on an upbeat note, agreeing that the meeting was productive and that we should continue to meet periodically.



*Peter, Tyler, Patrick and Sydney Murphy counting oyster spat for the fall report.*



*In September, St. Mary's College students assisted in the distribution of oyster cages to more the eighty waterfront property owners.*





*River lovers enjoy a paddle and tour on the Maryland Dove during RiverFest 2009.*



*RiverFest attendees learn how they can protect the watershed at one of the many educational booths.*

## Staff, Board, and Members Attend Meetings and Training

SMRWA Board President Joe Anderson and Executive Director Bob Lewis, along with members Sue Veith, Merideth Taylor, and Bob Elwood attended the October **Watershed Forum** in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. More than thirty workshops provided attendees with opportunities for increasing their knowledge and understanding of the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay.

Bob Lewis, Sue Veith, and SMRWA member Bob Boxwell attended the **Maryland Tributaries Team 14th Annual Meeting** in March. Boxwell was recognized as the 2009 Lower Potomac River Hero.

More than 80 people packed Cole Cinema in February for a **Living Shoreline Workshop**. SMRWA members were well represented with more than three dozen in attendance—as well as Program Director Lindsay Tempinon and Executive Director Bob Lewis.

## Lindsey Paul Rudolph Student Internship Receives Match Pledge

In memory of Lindsey Paul Rudolph, the Association has restricted funds received in her memory for a St. Mary's College student internship. This part-time position will focus on education outreach and building sustainable family environments. Monies will be invested in an endowment and income from those investments will fund the position. We anticipate awarding the first internship in the 2010-2011 school year.



In memory of Lindsey, each March we will have an annual fund drive in support of this endowment. The Paul and Rudolph families are humbled by the enormous support for this fund, and they hope to be able to expand it to several student internships each school year. **The Paul family will match donations received prior to June 1, 2010.**

## Judge Overturns BOA Decision—Favors Critical Areas Regulations

Earlier this month, a Prince George County judge ruled in favor of the environment by overturning a St. Mary's County Board of Appeals (BOA) ruling to allow a home and garage to be built in the critical areas expanded buffer.

The property owner on Cuckhold Creek in Hollywood argued that after the 100-foot critical area buffer was expanded to include steep slopes, there was no longer enough room to site his modest home, garage, and septic fields outside the forbidden area.

At a BOA hearing last summer, area residents submitted a petition signed by 35 neighbors requesting denial of the proposal. Several area homeowners had their projects altered due to expanded buffer restrictions and wanted equity factored into the BOA decision. The applicant agreed to install storm water controls on site, which are not required on single family homes. After making the finding that the Critical Area restrictions imposed a hardship, the BOA voted 3-2 to approve the variance as proposed.

Prince George County Judge Leo Green overturned the BOA decision saying the board failed to make the finding that the critical area restriction were an unwarranted hardship. The applicant can site the home 35 feet closer to the road and re-apply.

### 303d Campaign For Clean Waters

Portions of the St. Mary's River are impaired landing it on the 303d List, a list of waters not meeting state water quality standards. The Association has launched a 303d Campaign for Clean Water to raise monies to help improve the health of the St. Mary's River and get it removed from the 303d List.

Recently, the Maryland Department of the Environment released its draft 2010 Integrated Report (Section 303d and Section 305b of the Clean Water Act). Section 303d requires states to submit a list of all waters not meeting water quality standards that do not have water pollution controls in place or a Total Maximum Daily Load. A total maximum daily load or TMDL is a quota or pollution diet. Local communities will have to reduce the amount of pollution entering each river segment or face consequences such as mandatory restoration projects and stormwater retrofits (at local taxpayer expense) or denied state and federal permits for new development.

For more information, go to the Choose Clean Water Web site and click on "Issues" then "TMDL."  
<http://www.choosecleanwater.org/cms/tmdl>

### Member Receives River Hero Award



Last month, SMRWA member Bob Boxwell was recognized by Governor O'Malley as the 2009 Lower Potomac River Hero.



Donate Online!  
[www.SMRWA.org](http://www.SMRWA.org)

**Clean Water Donors**

**RIVER GUARDIAN**  
 The Boeing Foundation  
 The Community Foundation  
 Gail & John Harmon  
 Suellen & Bruce Keiner

**RIVER STEWARD**  
 Ann & David Allen  
 Abel & Doris Dominguez  
 Herbert M. & Naomi Leavitt Family Charitable Trust  
 Bob Lewis & Merideth Taylor  
 Patrick & Jean Murphy  
 Jeffrey & Julia Nichols

**RIVER FRIEND**

Russell & Flavienne Crenshaw	Susan Nash
Kate Fritz	Kristine & Michael Nash
John Giusti & Sherri Stanley	Joan Poor & Darrel Harmon
Suzanne & Jim Hardin	Larry & Susan Polsky
Larry Haskell	John Roberts & Karen Horton
Richard Holden	Donna & Charles Sasscer
Tom & Joan Lawrence	Brenda & Kenneth Songy
Susan & Peter Messitte	Joan & Richard Timbie
Bill & Carol Moody	

I would like to become a member of the SMRWA

Annual Membership Options	Price
<input type="checkbox"/> Guardian	\$1,003.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Steward	\$303.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Friend	\$103.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior	\$20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Student/Limited Income	\$10.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate <i>suggested</i>	\$500.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	_____

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer an electronic newsletter.

Please make checks payable to:  
 St. Mary's River Watershed  
 Association and mail this form  
 along with your check to:

SMRWA  
 PO Box 94  
 St. Mary's City, MD 20686

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone



### OUR MISSION

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



### Upcoming Events:

- St. Mary's River Clean Up—April 10 from 9AM to Noon - launch at Great Mills Canoe & Kayak Launch. BYO kayak or canoe & gear. Gloves and garbage bags provided.
- Earth Day on the Square—April 18 from 12:30 to 4PM in Leonardtown. Rain barrels on sale—\$40 for members.
- Sotterley Garden Fair—April 17-18 from 10AM to 4PM Admission fee. For more information 301-373-2280
- Potomac River Swim for the Environment—June 5; Swimmers will arrive at Point Lookout State Park beginning at 10:30 AM. Come cheer them to the finish line and enjoy potluck picnic and celebration. (Park fee)
- National Trails Day 5k Fun Run/Walk—June 5 at Historic St. Mary's City. Registration begins at 7AM. Fee. For more information 249-895-4964.
- RiverFest—September 25 from 10AM to 5 PM at Historic St. Mary's City, *FREE ADMISSION*

