

# WATERSHED WATCH

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

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 3  
DECEMBER 2010

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT—

Dear Friends of the St. Mary's River,

Close on the heels of the good news that Governor Martin O'Malley has designated nearly all of the upper St. Mary's River as an oyster sanctuary, I'm happy to report even more excellent news.

We have just learned that the St. Mary's River is one of more than thirty waterways in the Chesapeake region that will benefit in the current round of [EPA National Fish and Wildlife Foundation](#) grants. This \$134,149 Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grant will provide funding for watershed planning and for several small restoration projects within the St. Mary's River watershed.

As you know, our efforts to design a Watershed Restoration Action Strategy for the St. Mary's has been stalled due to a lack of available funds. This grant will allow us to complete the planning process, identify restoration projects, calculate the potential reduction in pollution loads, and install several demonstration storm water bioretention projects.

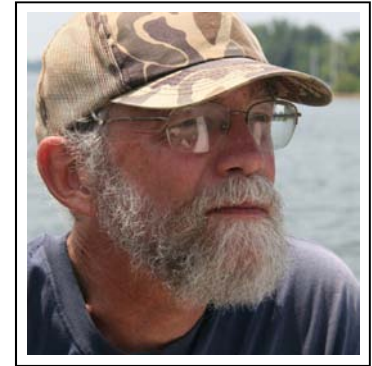
The St. Mary's River Watershed Association will be joined by several partners to undertake this important project. We will organize the local planning effort and bring stakeholders together to develop the EPA required Watershed Implementation Plan for the river. The [Center for Watershed Protection](#) will provide technical and

engineering support for the project. St. Mary's College of Maryland will provide the science component including baseline monitoring data; and the Maryland Sea Grant Extension will provide oversight for installation of the restoration projects.

The St. Mary's River is one of the most important rivers in Maryland. It has provided a living for waterman, recreation for many, and the pure beauty of being for centuries. Sadly, the river no longer supports thriving fisheries, and the quality of its water is so degraded that watermen must travel further or seek alternatives to working the water to make a living, and water related activities on the river such as swimming and sailing must at times be curtailed because of bacterial pollution. This is clearly unacceptable.

In fact, St. Mary's River is in such poor shape that it has been designated an "impaired river" under section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. We're confident that this grant will take us one step closer to getting the St. Mary's removed from the EPA's impaired rivers list. As we move into the holiday season, we ask you to consider making a donation to our [303D Campaign for a Clean River](#)—a gift to secure a clean and vibrant St. Mary's River is a gift to us all.

Sincerely,  
Joe Anderson



Joe Anderson

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *First Annual River Gala & Sanctuary Birthday Party! SAVE THE DATE: May 15, 2011 at Brome Howard Inn*
- *RiverFest—SAVE THE DATE! 10 AM to 5 PM, Sept. 3, 2011 at Historic St. Mary's City*

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## 303 D CAMPAIGN FOR A CLEAN RIVER—

### Donors for 2010

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#### RIVER FRIEND

Russell & Flavienne Crenshaw	John Roberts & Karen Horton
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Larry & Susan Polsky	

The 303 d Campaign for a Clean River was launched one year ago with two goals: a clean and healthy river and a better informed and motivated constituency.

Maryland has designated the St. Mary's River as an "impaired" river under section 303d of the Clean Water Act. According to the State, our tidal river fails in three areas: not enough acreage of subaquatic vegetation, periodic algae concentrations that are too high, and a seasonal lack of life-sustaining oxygen in the deeper waters. Several segments of the fresh water streams leading into the tidal river also fail to meet State criteria and are listed as "poor" for biological integrity.

We have pledged to get our river off of the impaired rivers list.

It will not be easy. We need to reduce the nutrients and sediments entering the system, rebuild natural habitats and shorelines that are degraded, and create a plan of how we will maintain our revitalized and healthy river system for generation to come.

Only through the generosity and dedication of more than forty of our members (see list on left) were we able to begin this ambitious campaign in 2010. Foundation grant and public monies will be necessary to complete many of the expensive stormwater retention and habitat restoration projects. But grants do not cover every expense, and we need a steady funding stream for the continuous support that this aggressive campaign requires.

Please [renew your commitment](#) to this important campaign. Or [join](#) in and become a part of a select group of major donors who are compassionate about our river, committed to its restoration, and generous in their support!

## Second Boeing Grant For Oyster Restoration



[Boeing Global Corporate Citizenship](#) awarded SMRWA a \$13,780 grant last month for oyster restoration in the St. Mary's River. Last year Boeing awarded us \$10,000, which was used to plant 775,000 oysters in the St. Mary's River sanctuary.



Last April, [Constellation Energy](#) awarded SMRWA a \$5,000 Eco-Star grant to create a five-acre demonstration bar at Chancellor's Point. Due to changes in regulations at the state level, a backlog of applications for lease bars, and a subsequent denial of our lease application, this project has been delayed until next spring. The demonstration bar will be built in an area where a permit is not required.

## Incoming SMCM Students Join Community Members for Oyster Planting

Last August, incoming first-year students planted 500,000 oysters in the St. Mary's River Sanctuary. The project was partially funded by Boeing Global Corporate Citizenship (\$10,000) and Constellation Energy (\$5,000).

Students unloaded oysters from a truck, loaded them on to a barge, traveled to the planting site about 1/4 mile away, and spread the oysters on an existing, but depleted, oyster bar. SMRWA board members Richard Holden and Pat Murphy ferried media personnel and spectators to the planting site.

The half-million one-year old oysters were provided by [Johnny Oyster Seed Company](#) (St. Leonard, MD) at a reduced cost.

We are planning another community service oyster planting event for new student orientation this coming year on August 25, 2011.



Many of the volunteers who planted oysters on August 28.



Loading oysters onto the barge; Ava gets covered with river mud; Stacking bags for the next wheelbarrow; Oysters going overboard.

## Marylanders Grow Oysters Begins Second Year

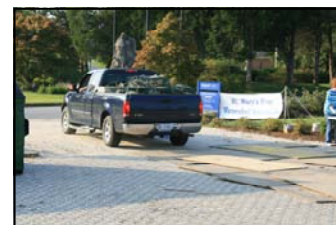
The Marylanders Grow Oysters in the St. Mary's River program entered into its second year this past September when about 150 volunteers gathered to pick up cages of baby oysters to take home to hang on their docks for the winter. They will care for the infants through their first vulnerable year of life.

The program expanded to 97 dock owners and 650 cages hosting approximately 195,000 spat. In June 2011, the oysters will be planted into the St. Mary's River oyster sanctuary where they can mature and reproduce.

This program is funded through a partnership with the [Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources](#), the [Oyster Recovery Partnership](#), [Boeing Global Corporate Citizenship](#), and [SMRWA](#).



Volunteers fill 650 cages with spat-on-shell—Sept. 17, 2010.



Volunteer John Giusti enjoys the beautiful day as college students distribute cages of oysters to volunteer growers—Sept. 18, 2010.

# RiverFest 2010

## Thank You Sponsors!

We are sincerely grateful to our fifty RiverFest sponsors. Their generous donations provided for nearly all of the activities, services, entertainment, and exhibits, so that we could keep RiverFest a FREE ADMISSION event!

Join us next year on Saturday Sept. 3, 2011, from 10 to 5 at [Historic St. Mary's City](#).





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## RiverFest 2010 A Huge Success!

More than 1500 people celebrated at the sixth annual RiverFest on a weather-perfect day at Historic St. Mary's City—a record attendance for this annual celebration of the St. Mary's River.

Pumpkin painting and face painting were popular with the small kids. Touch tanks, knot tying, and kayaking captivated the in-betweeners. And Mutts Gone Nuts dazzled everyone!

The third annual Wade-In with luminary Bernie Fowler was also a huge hit with more than forty folks venturing into St. Mary's River to see just how deep they could go and still see their feet. Other dignitaries wading-in included Delegate John Bohanan, Senator Roy Dyson, Commissioner Jack Russell, and MDE Secretary Shari Wilson.

The actual depth appeared to be less important than the ritual, as debate erupted after the wade-in as to whether the depth was 44 inches or 47 inches. None-the-less it was a few less inches than the past two years, but still well over the heads of many of the reduced-stature waders.

We have been overwhelmed with compliments from folks who really enjoyed the activities, live music, beautiful setting, and refreshing cool waters of our celebrated St. Mary's River.



## Sewage Spills All Too Common—CodeRED Policy Now in Play

Last month SMRWA received a complaint from a SMCM student who was wind surfing in Horseshoe Bend in the area near Fisherman's Creek *at the same time* METCOM workers were repairing a sewage leak and spill of 45,000 gallons of untreated raw sewage into Fisherman's Creek.

"I wish someone had told me to get out of the water," a third year student told us. Officials did not post warnings until 48 hours after the reporting of the spill, and they notified area residents via CodeRED two weeks after the initial spill.

SMRWA responded by questioning official notification procedures and insisting that the county utilize the CodeRED warning system (automated telephone messages). This system can be deployed for specific neighborhoods.

Still the recent spate of sewage spills is garnering attention at SMRWA. Every spill is a public health hazard, an

environmental hazard, and an illegal discharge of pollutants into our rivers. In the past year or so, four spills have occurred: the Upper St. Mary's River spill in the Wildewood area, Pembroke Run spill in Southampton, Fisherman's Creek spill which closed the college waterfront for two weeks in October, and the recent Hilton Run spill. On Nov. 22 a 55,000-gallon spill into Hilton Run led to warnings in the area around St. Mary's Square and South Essex Drive. Last month, a power failure at nearby Marlay-Taylor Water Reclamation Facility caused a spill directly into the Bay. The CodeRED system was deployed—thanks to SMRWA—for these two recent spills.

SMRWA will be meeting with officials at METCOM to determine what is being done to maintain and update their systems, to insist that affected residents are notified immediately, and to explore ways to arrest the flow of sewage into our streams.

## SMRWA Joins Campaign to Ban Arsenic in Chicken Feed

For more than 60 years, chicken factory farms on Maryland's Eastern Shore have been using arsenic in their chicken feed as a medication, cosmetic, and growth promoter. Arsenic is a known carcinogen. Yet detectable traces of arsenic are present in the chicken we eat.



According to [Food & Water Watch](#), nearly 100 percent of chicken menu items in fast food restaurants and 74 percent of the chicken we buy in grocery stores contains traces of arsenic.

Ongoing human and environmental exposure to very low levels of arsenic has not been studied extensively.

Accumulation of arsenic in ground water used for drinking water is also a threat that merits more study. An analysis of eastern shore tap water found higher levels of arsenic where chicken litter is spread on fields than where it is not.

The chicken industry has alternatives to arsenic in chicken feed. The European Union banned arsenic in chicken feed over 10 years ago.

Join the St. Mary's River Watershed Association, Food and Water Watch, and hundreds of other advocacy groups in calling for the cessation on arsenic use in chicken feed. Sign a petition and write your state legislators—ban arsenic from chicken feed. For more information:

[http://www.smrwa.org/pdfdocs/pr\\_2010-10-30Arsenic.pdf](http://www.smrwa.org/pdfdocs/pr_2010-10-30Arsenic.pdf) or <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/food/foodsafety/>

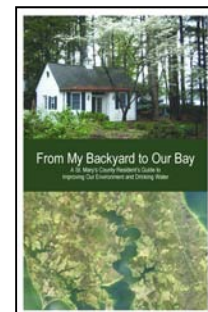
## New Homeowner's Guide to Conservation Available Free Locally

Forty pages of conservation techniques that will save money and reduce your impact on our rivers and streams. Published by your St. Mary's River Watershed Association and generously funded by the Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust, The Printing Press Inc., Chesapeake Bay Trust, St. Mary's Soil Conservation District, David A. Reumont CPA PC, and John & Julie McAllister.

Pick up your copy today at The Greenery, Hilltop Graphics & Gifts, The Glass Garden Shoppe, Dyson's Building Center, or Good Earth Natural Foods.

[Free download](#) at our Web site: [www.SMRWA.org](http://www.SMRWA.org)

**FREE**



## News Briefs

### Oyster Sanctuary

October 1 marked the official opening of the oyster season. It was also the day that Maryland Resources Police began enforcing a new oyster sanctuary in the St. Mary's River. The restricted area lies north of a line running nearly due west (269°) from Church Point to a point on the western shore approximately halfway between Deep Point and Pagan Point. There are two grandfathered lease areas within the sanctuary and both are located just west of Long Point in the Pristine Way area. Many dock owners grow oysters in floats and are permitted to harvest them, although MDE warns dock growers of potential high bacteria-related health issues with oysters around docks and shorelines.

**Catch a Poacher 24 Hour Hotline**  
**1-800-635-6124**



Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
 Fisheries Service Shellfish Closure Areas  
 Maryland Department of the Environment  
 Shellfish Growing Water Classifications  
 Map L13 (Publication date: 09/06/2010)



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

### River Gala & Birthday Party

Please mark your calendar and join us on Sunday afternoon May 15 for a birthday celebration of the St. Mary's River Oyster Sanctuary. This ticketed event will feature jazz cabaret with Gretchen and Randy Richie, delightful fare from the river prepared by Chef Michael, local wines and beers, a silent auction, and door prizes.

The event will be held at [Brome Howard Inn](#) on the banks of the St. Mary's River. There will be a volunteer recognition ceremony. Don't miss out on this first annual gala. Meet folks (like you!) who care about our river and are doing something to restore its health.

You can reserve your tickets today by emailing [info@stmarysriver.org](mailto:info@stmarysriver.org) or calling 301-862-3517. Tickets are \$50 per person.

We need your help selling tickets and planning this event. Please call us to volunteer.

#### 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

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### 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.

**We're on the web!**  
[www.smrwa.org](http://www.smrwa.org)

### Upcoming Events:

- Owl Prowl—Four Fridays: Dec 3 & 10 and Jan 7 & 14, from 8 PM at Myrtle Point Park. Dress warm; bring a flashlight; park outside of Park gate; For more information: Bob Boxwell 410-394-1300 [Friends of Myrtle Point Park]
- Pruning Workshop—Saturday, Feb. 12 from 10 AM until Noon at the Muldoon River Center [SMCM Arboretum Association]
- St. Mary's River Clean Up—April 9 from 9 AM until 1 PM (bring your canoe or kayak) Great Mills Canoe & Kayak Launch
- **River Gala Fundraiser & Birthday Party**—Sunday, May 15 from 1 PM to 4 PM at the Brome Howard Inn
- Marylanders Grow Oysters Cage Collection—TBA (May-June) St. Mary's College of Maryland Waterfront
- Oyster Bar Restoration Project—Sunday, Aug 28 from 9 AM until Noon at Muldoon River Center.
- **RiverFest 2011**—September 3 from 10AM to 5 PM at Historic St. Mary's City, *FREE ADMISSION*

