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WATERSHED WATCH

ST. MARY'S RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

PO Box 94

St. Mary's City, MD 20686

February 3, 2016

Happy Valentine's
Day!

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INSIDE THIS EDITION

[Hogan Questions Oyster
Restoration Efforts](#)

[VA Approves Dumping
into Potomac](#)

[River Clean Up](#)

Hogan Asks Corps to Halt Oyster Restoration

Last month, Governor Hogan sent a letter to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers asking them to suspend oyster restoration efforts on the Tred Avon River until a task force delivers a report on the success of Maryland's oyster sanctuaries. That report is due out in July and will provide an assessment on whether sanctuaries are meeting goals and objectives. Effective October 1, 2010, former Governor O'Malley had increased the area of Maryland's sanctuaries from 8% to 24% of productive areas. Shortly after, O'Malley promised watermen, who were angered by the expansion of sanctuaries, that he would appoint a task force to report on the success of sanctuaries after five years.

Bill Goldsborough, director of fisheries at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, says there is a "bias by the Hogan Administration against restoring oysters on sanctuary bars" with this decision as most bars (76%) are still open to oystermen who continue to enjoy increasing harvests in each of the past five years. In the St. Mary's River, the oyster harvest in winter 2013-2014 was seven times greater than in the winter 2009-2010, which suggests that the sanctuary upriver of the public harvest area is functioning as a reproduction area for recruitment down river.

For more information, visit [The Star Democrat website](#).

Watermen Seek Support to Stop Coal Ash Pond Draining

January 14, 2016 - Richmond, VA—The Virginia State Water Control Board today approved a permit to allow Dominion Virginia Power to de-water five coal ash ponds at the Possum Power Plant and discharge the

treated effluent in to Quantico Creek near its confluence with the Potomac River. Coal ash ponds contain the residue from burning coal to produce electricity. The extent of the effluent treatment process was not discussed in detail at the meeting although Dominion claimed that their proposal met all EPA and State requirements. Typically, coal ash ponds contains very high levels of heavy metals and other toxins. Opponents claimed that the treatment process will be inadequate and large quantities of heavy metals, including mercury and arsenic, will concentrate in the discharge area and drift downstream adversely affecting the marine environment.

Maryland Watermen's Association president, Robert T. Brown, contacted the Association asking for signatures on a petition of protest to the permit approval and for our help in reversing the decision. Heavy metals are quickly absorbed into the flesh of fish. Over time the levels increase as there is no natural process to rid their bodies of the toxins. Children and women of childbearing age are already warned to not eat the fish in this area of the Potomac due to high levels of mercury in the flesh. Additional dumping by Dominion might add to the existing problem and negatively impact the Potomac fishery. [Change.org](#) has posted a petition [online](#).

Annual River Clean Up

April 23, 2016



Mark your calendars! We are hosting another river clean up in which we will be paddling a section of the St. Mary's River at the end of Atkins Road to collect litter in and around our beloved river and streams. Volunteers are so important as their efforts greatly support the overall health of the St. Mary's River and its watershed. Be sure to bring your kayak or canoe, life jacket, and enthusiasm! This event will occur on private property—therefore we require participants to register.

If you are interested, contact us with any questions and to register.

Email: meghan.m.webster@gmail.com
Phone: (240) 256-0147 | [Facebook](#)



We're on the web!
www.smrwa.org



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Upcoming Events:

- TBA - An Oyster Lovers Social will be held in March at the Ruddy Duck
- Earth Day on the Square
Noon to 4:30 Leonardtown
- St. Mary's River Clean Up
9:00 April 23
RSVP
- TBA - *A River Affair*
May-June time frame - stay tuned
- RiverFest
11:00 to 4:00 September 24
Historic St. Mary's City

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