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WATERSHED WATCH

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

November 27, 2018

GIVING TUESDAY

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INSIDE THIS EDITION

—> Sanctuary Leases



More Aquaculture Applications in Sanctuary

Public Meeting December 4, 4-6 pm 2nd District Firehouse

The St. Mary's River is again under threat from additional aquaculture in the sanctuary. Capt. Robert T. Brown has applied for another 20.5 acres of bottom in the St. Mary's River sanctuary—he already has 7.6 acres permitted on which he tells us he planted 3500 bushels of shell in spring 2017. On the new bottom Brown told us he plans to plant shell and harvest spat "to sell to other watermen or to move up the Potomac."

Residents can learn more and are asked to comment on Brown's three applications at a public meeting to be held at the Second District Fire Station in Valley Lee from 4 to 6 pm on December 4.

Questions should be raised about the legality of harvesting wild oysters within a Maryland sanctuary. Current law requires a lease holder to plant spat and harvest that product such as a farmer plants seeds and harvests grain or produce.



Attendees should also ask about the 25% rule. Regulations state that only 25% of "restorable" bottom can be leased. At an August Oyster Advisory Commission meeting in Annapolis, DNR staff stated that the St. Mary's likely has just 69 acres of restorable bottom not including the leased areas. Yet the state has already issued permits for six leases with a total acreage of 36.1 acres. How can DNR entertain applications for an additional 20.5 acres? (maybe I'm getting old, but this new math is puzzling me?)



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Upcoming Events: *Mark Your Calendar*

- A RIVER AFFAIR
Monday, May 27, 2019
1:00 to 4:00
Ruddy Duck St. George Island
SAVE THE DATE
- ANNUAL MEETING
TBD

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