

***** PRESS RELEASE *****

For immediate release - July 19, 2011; Contact Bob Lewis 301-862-3517

Incoming students to plant one million oysters

On the morning of August 27th, orientation week at St. Mary's College of Maryland will be coming to a close with a variety of community service projects from which students can choose. One project will be the planting of one million baby oysters, known as spat, into the St. Mary's River Oyster Sanctuary. Beginning at 9:00 AM and lasting about three hours, thirty students will work from the Muldoon River Center to load spat onto a barge and then sprinkle them on a depleted oyster bar well offshore.

The effort is funded by generous grants from Boeing Global Corporate Citizenship and Tidewater Dental. Spat and planting support will be provided by Johnny Oyster Seed Company in Lusby.

Oysters are filter feeders and serve a vital function in the Chesapeake Bay's ecosystem. One adult oyster can filter fifty-five gallons of water each day. Historically, oysters filtered all of the Bay's water every three days—today it takes nearly one year.

The public is encouraged to attend. For more information, visit <http://www.smrwa.org/> or call 301-862-3517.



SMCM student volunteers for the 2010 oyster planting cheer after the barge returns from planting 530,000 oysters.



Students unload bags of oyster spat from a trailer to the waterfront.



Students shovel oysters from the barge into the oyster sanctuary.