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WATERSHED WATCH

ST. MARY'S RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

PO Box 94

St. Mary's City, MD 20686

May 5, 2015

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Aquaculture Again Moving Forward

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Last month the Department of Natural Resources reached a settlement with opponents to the first three applications for oyster bottom leases within the St. Mary's River oyster sanctuary. About forty residents filed a Petition of Protest last summer arguing that the sanctuary designation should be upheld as a non-commercial area and aquaculture should happen outside the sanctuary boundaries.

The Association worked closely with the Department over the past two and a half years attempting to minimize the impacts of commercial harvesting on wild oyster bars within the sanctuary. Separately the Association sought legislation that would repeal the regulatory authorization that permitted aquaculture in Maryland's sanctuaries. In two legislative sessions (2013 and 2014) and with Delegate Bohanan's help, we were unable to move any legislation through the Assembly. The Association did win concessions from the Department who then required specific criteria for the St. Mary's River that severely restricted potential total lease area and put thriving oyster bars off-limits to aquaculture.

The recent settlement made additional strides in limiting lease areas. The Department agreed to an increase in setback (to 100 feet) from one waterfront landowner so as not to restrict navigability around their dock and shoreline. Additionally, the Department agreed that for all other applicants they would develop and implement a better protocol for the assessment of potential lease bottom to determine whether the area supported wild oysters

in sufficient density to deny applicants and to re-survey/survey all proposals utilizing this new protocol.

SMRWA at the Green Arts Festival



The St. Mary's River Watershed Association was one of many exhibitors at the Chesapeake Public Charter School 1st Annual Green Arts Festival, held this past Saturday, May 2nd. The SMRWA provided environmentally friendly arts and crafts and educational displays for visitors, including peanut butter pinecone bird feeders, oyster shell and driftwood painting, and a stream bug identification and touch tank.



Upcoming Events:

- **YOUTH FISHING RODEO**
Saturday, May 9, 2015
8:00 am to noon
St. Mary's River State Park
- **POTOMAC RIVER SWIM**
Saturday, June 6, 2015
Point Lookout State Park
Bring a dish to share -
lunch begins at 10:00 am



OUR MISSION

To protect, improve, and promote the sustainability 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



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More info 301-737-2903.

- **A RIVER AFFAIR**
Sunday, June 7, 2015
1:00 to 4:00 pm
State House at Historic St. Mary's City [BUY TICKETS ONLINE](#)

- **NATIONAL ENVIROTHON OYSTER PLANTING**
Tuesday, June 17, 2015
1:00 pm
College Waterfront

- **SAVE THE DATE**



Saturday, September 26, 2015
11:00 am to 4:00 pm
State House,
Historic St. Mary's City
More info 301-737-2903

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