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WATERSHED WATCH

ST. MARY'S RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

PO Box 94

St. Mary's City, MD 20686

August 4, 2015

Summer Interns Help With Reef Survey

On July 21 and 22, summer interns, Meghan Webster, Chandler Wyatt, and Michaela Richardson and staffer, Allison Rugila, conducted a survey of oyster bars planted by the Association in the St. Mary's sanctuary. One and a half bushels of shell were sampled from each of the eight oyster bars and analyzed for oyster survival and spat recruitment.



"The survey gave us a lot of insight into the health of the river and status of its oyster reefs. It is rewarding to witness how the reefs have impacted the surrounding water quality and become established," said intern, Chandler Wyatt. "It makes the future of having a healthy St. Mary's river seem that much closer."

According to our data, average survival rates in these bars exceed 55% while summer wild oyster recruitment appears to be reduced and delayed. Low recruitment levels are likely due to the prolonged low salinity and high temperatures (often below 12 ppt salinity and recently as high as 29 degrees C) observed in weekly water quality monitoring. Although these conditions are not ideal for spawning adults or larval oysters, natural recruitment is anticipated to pick up in August. Additionally, since May average water clarity has remained at or above 1 meter.

This survey also brought to light the extensive network of locals that are keeping watch over the sanctuary. Our boat quickly drew the attention of nearby homeowners and boaters (and even the Maryland Natural Resources Police) who quickly approached us and inquired about the survey. We can't thank you enough for your diligence!

Rain Garden Installations

This month the Association has installed two rain gardens at two properties in the St. Mary's River watershed. These gardens mitigate pollution from stormwater runoff by retaining and reducing the amount of pollutants (including nutrients, sediments, and chemicals) that enter our waterways. Gardens installed by the Association include only native plants (creating habitat) and serve as a basin for rain water to collect and percolate into the ground or be absorbed by the plants. All materials used to build these gardens were purchased from local, family-owned businesses.



We are grateful to the Garner's and the Oakley's who were the lucky winners of the rain garden auction item at the June 7th A River Affair.

Grant funding, provided by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, is still available (up to 50-50 cost share) for rain garden installations in the watershed. Interested homeowners should contact us at info@stmarysriver.org or 301-737-2903.



SMRWA at Governor's Cup

On Saturday, August 1st



the Association exhibited at Govenors Cup, held at the St. Mary's College of Maryland waterfront.



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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Upcoming Events:

- ***Oyster Planting***
Sunday, September 13, 2015
9:00 am to 11:00 am
St. Mary's College Waterfront
Please RSVP, 301-904-2387
- ***Annual Meeting***
Saturday, September 19, 2015
Guest Speaker - SMCM President
Tuajuanda C. Jordan
10:00 am, TBD
- ***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