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WATERSHED WATCH

ST. MARY'S RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

PO Box 94
St. Mary's City, MD 20686

July 26, 2017

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Asbury Solomons Goes Green Rain Garden at Pam & George Callen's Cottage

INSIDE THIS EDITION

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July 18—Asbury Solomon's Homeowners, Pam and George Callen, won a rain garden at our A River Affair fundraiser back in June. Aura Grego—a St. Mary's County Watershed Steward's Academy student—took leadership of this project for her Capstone per requirement of the WSA class. The installation took just over a day and looks beautiful! Thank you to the Callens, Aura, Asbury, and WSA!

Salinity Levels Too High

Oyster Diseases Threaten Industry and Restoration



Photo courtesy of Dave Harp

Our region has been lucky to receive above average rainfall nearly every year since the 1998-2002 drought. Drought causes the salinity of the Bay and our rivers to rise. And oyster diseases thrive in higher salinity. After four years of below-average rainfall, oyster mortality in the St. Mary's River in 2002 peaked with more than 80% of 4-year-olds succumbing to disease.

Since August 2016, we have had many months of below average rainfall Bay-wide and that caused salinity levels to rise considerably. The result was a significant die-off of oysters in localized areas on the Eastern shore and at the mouth of the St. Mary's River. Watermen reported last winter that more than 85% of oysters had died at the mouth. The state's official survey indicated a 50% mortality. The difference merely lies in how each group assessed the damage. DNR reported 50% of oysters 1 inch or larger had died. Watermen are mainly concerned with market oysters (3-inch and up).



The Association began watching salinity level closely since last spring and the news is not good. Dermo and MSX thrive in higher salinities?above 15 ppt?and, unfortunately, salinity levels have extended further up the St. Mary's to Horseshoe Point and Long Point. While we are not seeing mortality events this summer, we are in a crisis situation as salinity has remained well above 15 ppt through mid-July.

Recent rains have been widespread and especially this weekend heavy rains caused flooding in much of Pennsylvania's Susquehanna valley. Salinity levels in the Bay have dropped considerably and are now slightly below normal for this time of year. In the St. Mary's River, salinity has returned to safer levels after reaching a high of 16 ppt on July 10. Currently at 12 ppt salinity, the diseases, especially MSX, will be driven from the oysters and depart our waters again. Let's all keep dancing so the rains keep coming!

WIN A PADDLE BOARD!!

\$2 a chance, 6 for \$10

Our Raffle is now open to participants!
This year we are raffling off a 10' Stand Up Paddle Board.
[Buy tickets here!](#) All proceeds go to SMRWA.



RiverFest 2017

Mark your calendars!!

Saturday, September 23, 2017

1:00 to 4:00 pm

FREE!!



[We're on the web!](#)

Upcoming Events:

- [Gov Cup](#)
Saturday, August 5
Gets underway at 10:00 am
St. Mary's College of Maryland
- MGO Cage Refill
TBD - either Friday or Saturday

www.smrwa.org



[Join or Renew Today!](#)

August 25 or 26
St. Mary's College of Maryland
Volunteers appreciated



• Saturday, September 23
11 am to 4 pm
Historic St. Mary's City

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