



I, _____, pledge to participate in the following behavior changes of conservation practices:

DO YOUR PART — *micro actions impact the big picture. Energy conservation and advocating change is as beneficial as tangible projects.*

- Pledge to unplug unneeded electronic devices in your home to reduce phantom loads.
- Pledge to install energy efficient light bulbs.
- Pledge to volunteer for and donate to local environmental organizations.
- Pledge to install energy star appliances in your home when an opportunity arises to do so or replace old appliances.
- Pledge to have your yard Maryland Baywise Certified.
- Pledge to reduce car use through carpooling, use of public transit, or planning fuel efficient trips by combining travel needs.
- Pledge to recycle metal, paper, plastics, and glass (Plastic bags can be recycled at the grocery store).
- Pledge to buy local products and support family businesses.

WATER WISE — *Fresh water is limited. There are means to conserve water and reduce usage when maintaining your yard.*

- Pledge to limit lawn irrigation to times when it's absolutely necessary and in compliance with local policies.
- Pledge to water your garden/ lawn in the morning or evening to avoid the heat of the day .
- Pledge to water at the base of your plants.
- Pledge to use drip- or micro-irrigation for your garden and/or other landscapes on your property.
- Pledge to reduce water use for showers, teeth brushing, and shaving by turning tap off in between needs.

CARE FOR OUR WATERWAY — *Limiting direct impacts on our waterways and supporting vital habitats enhance recreational enjoyment and Chesapeake Bay health.*

- Pledge to reduce use of cleaners, and only use approved marine cleaners, on boats and piers.
- Pledge to clean vessels, trailers, vehicle tires, and boats prior to moving into a different waterway to prevent spread of invasive species.
- Pledge to be vigilant in use of fuels and lubricants near waterways and to clean up spills immediately.
- Pledge to grow oysters at your pier.

INNOVATIVE LANDSCAPING — *There are ways to mediate runoff and infiltration rates that can also bring beauty to your yard.*

- Pledge to install a living shoreline.
- Pledge to plant trees so their canopy overhangs impervious surfaces to channel storm water to natural, pervious ground.
- Pledge to develop and install an innovative storm water control, such as conservation landscaping.
- Pledge to use compost, grass clippings, fallen leaves, and other organic debris as mulch instead of discarding them in the trash.
- Pledge to allow trees to mulch the ground around them with their fallen leaves.

SUSTAINABLE LAWN CARE — *Fertilizers used on lawn maintenance are a major polluter. Turf grass increases runoff rates.*

- Pledge to use less, organic, or no fertilizers and pesticides. Pledge to avoid routine applications of organic products.
- Pledge decreasing lawn area by replacing with alternatives to turf grass.
- Pledge to keep a compost pile to reduce your waste and increase soil microbe production.
- Pledge to mow your turf grass to at least 3-inch height to slow runoff.
- Pledge to utilize integrated pest management in your home and garden.
- Pledge to aerate your yard regularly to increase run-off infiltration rate.
- Pledge to “grass-cycle” — leave grass clippings where you mow to decompose.



RUNOFF REDUCTION — *Many factors –including pet waste & impervious surfaces– negatively impact aquatic life by altering the balance of nutrient composition of the water.*

- Pledge to clean up after your pet and dispose of their waste at landfills.
- Pledge to install and maintain a rain garden at your home.
- Pledge to install and utilize a rain barrel or cistern.
- Pledge to reduce impervious surface and install porous pavers/pervious driveway.
- Pledge to apply for a grant to install nitrogen-reducing BAT septic system (ask us about grants).
- Pledge to pump your septic system every three years.

WILDLIFE AWARENESS — *Wildlife is a big contributor to biodiversity and overall health of our natural environment. Native animals and insects play an essential role to our community.*

- Pledge to maintain a water source — i.e. bird bath, small pond.
- Pledge to set up a birdhouse, toad house, wood pile, or other wildlife shelter.
- Pledge to incorporate native plants to encourage native species to establish on your property.
- Pledge to plant native, nectar-rich plants to encourage pollinators, such as: *Joe-pye weed, native asters, blazing star, goldenrod.*
- Pledge to plant native plants that attract butterflies, such as: *white turtlehead, spicebush, pawpaw tree, milkweed.*

Signature of Pledgee

Date

Please mail the completed form to the following address:

SMRWA
P.O. Box 94
St. Mary's City, MD 20686



Our mission is to Protect, Improve, and Promote the sustainability of the St. Mary's River Watershed through collaborative efforts of economic, agricultural, environmental, social, cultural, and political stakeholders in the community.