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WATERSHED WATCH

ST. MARY'S RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION
PO Box 94
St. Mary's City, MD 20686

March 17, 2021

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PFAS in Pet Food

[Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances]

Toxins in Pet Food Causes Shortened Lives

INSIDE THIS EDITION

>>PFAS in Pet Food

>>The 'Put & Take' Industry
Shelling Oyster Bars

>>[Annual Report available](#)

CANCELLED

A River Affair



Nearly thirteen years ago, the Environmental Working Group (EWG) published a report on the body of science looking at chemical toxins and heavy metals in pet food: [Polluted Pets—High Levels of Toxic Industrial Chemicals Contaminate Cats And Dogs—Summary and Findings](#). Likely little has changed over the past few years in our pets' bodies as far as these findings suggest. We know mercury and methylmercury are both less prevalent in the environment and PFOS and PFOA are no longer manufactured. Still many more chemicals have been marketed since 2008—thousands more, and scientists are telling us these newer chemicals have similar toxic effects on animals. The report provides good information to pet owners who desire more healthy alternatives.



PFAS (referred to as "PFCs" in this report), phthalates, polybrominated diphenyl ethers, bisphenol A, and heavy metals (mercury, methylmercury, and lead) are commonly found in humans and in pets—sometime at many times higher levels in pets than humans. Studies suggest much of this is a result of the food we



feed our pets.



What has changed over the past thirteen years is public awareness of toxins in our environment and particularly in our food. Manufacturers have stepped up in response. (Manufacturers ended the

production of PFOS and PFOA) Many provide information on chemicals they no longer use, or never used, in their products. Frequently an email or phone call to the manufacturer can provide consumers with information on specific toxins and health concerns. Do not be misled by claims of "all natural" or "healthy choice" as many products may provide healthy and all natural ingredients, but be sold in chemical-laden packaging.

Did you know scientists believe that the most common sources of PFAS is from waste incinerators, leachate from landfills, and manufacturing smokestacks? PFAS, and many of these other toxins in the EWG report, are ubiquitous in our environment. 99% (maybe more) of humans have PFAS in their bodies. PFAS are associated with suppressed immune function, thyroid disease, testicular and kidney disease, cancers, and liver damage.

Visit our web page, [PFAS in St. Mary's County](#), to learn more about this family of over 4,800 fluorinated chemicals sold worldwide.

Put 'N' Take

Shelling River Bottom to Aid Watermen

For many decades, Maryland supported the oyster replenishment program referred to as Put 'N' Take. Using public monies, oyster shells

were "planted" by the ton on the river bottom throughout much of the saltier waters of Maryland's Bay. In areas with successful oyster reproduction, these shells would naturally "strike" with baby oysters. When these oysters grew to market size (about 3-4 years), they were harvested by watermen and sold into the market.



State support for this program was cut back significantly under Governor O'Malley (2007-2015) who, by executive order, instituted a new initiative to incentivize watermen to move away from the wild

harvest and into oyster farming. The cost of the replenishment program was deemed too high even with a buyer-paid \$1 per bushel tax, which was then returned to the program along with several million dollars in "mitigation" monies from Maryland State Highway Administration and general funds from the Maryland coffers.



We asked DNR staff if they could provide information on these photos taken in 2000 and looking south across Horseshoe Bend in the St. Mary's River. In a March 2, 2021 email DNR staff replied:

The photos show the state's contractor, Langenfelder

Marine, planting "dredge shells" in the river. The shells originated in the upper Bay near Rock Hall, where they were excavated (dredged) from old buried oyster bars. At the dredge site, the shells were loaded on barges and then towed down the Bay to the planting locations in various rivers. The shells in the photo were being planted to enhance oyster fishery bottom, since this is before the St. Mary's River shellfish sanctuary was designated in 2010. Approximately 5,000 bushels were planted per acre back then creating a 2" layer of shells, but 10,000 bushels per acre were done at times. One barge holds about 20,000 to 40,000 bushels, depending on the size of the barge. The tug is "Crystal Coast" from Dann Tugs in VA and the small barge with the equipment is known as the pump barge, owned by Langenfelder Marine. The pump barge is on site for whatever number of days is needed to complete a river. It anchors each night. It has two large water cannons that wash the shells overboard as the whole operation slowly moves over the bar.

Membership renewals are now due

[Click here to renew your membership online.](#)



OUR MISSION

To protect, improve, and promote the sustainability of the St. Mary's River Watershed

Upcoming Events:

- St. Mary's River Clean-Up
Saturday April 10, 9 to 11 am
[Tentative - Location TBD]
- A River Affair
Will Not Be Held May 31

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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Due to Covid

- RiverFest 2021
Saturday September 25
11 am to 4 pm
Historic St. Mary's City Museum

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