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WATERSHED WATCH

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

December 19, 2023

[Join or Renew](#)

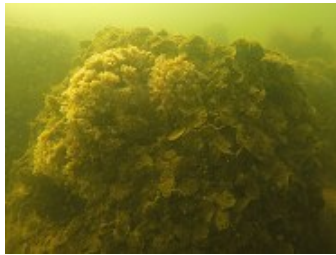
Happy Holidays to All Our Friends!

INSIDE THIS EDITION

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**Need a Last
Minute Holiday
Gift?**

**Give the Gift of Clean
Water!**



A satisfying gift for a healthier St. Mary's River - one Reef Ball will be etched with the giftee's name and installed into the St. Mary's River where up to 400 oysters will make it their home. [Download form.](#) or [purchase online.](#)
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2023 Year in Review

[Read the Full Report](#)

Thanks to the collaborative efforts of our members, volunteers, and donors, the St. Mary's River Watershed Association made significant progress towards our mission in 2023.

Our 2023 Successes Include:

- Engaging over 650 volunteers in hands-on environmental stewardship initiatives
- Observing oyster reproduction in Breton Bay for the first time in two decades
- Expanding our oyster restoration footprint by 2.5 acres
- [... and much more...](#)



Top Challenges for 2024:

- Crafting a scientific study to evaluate the sanctuary's effectiveness
- Finding a new restoration area through monitoring and bottom surveys
- Advocating for public access to the St. Mary's River and sustainable, low-impact development

[Read the Full Report](#)

State Issues Fish Consumption Advisories for PFAS

On December 8th, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) issued [updated fish consumption advisories](#) for per- and polyfluoroalkyl



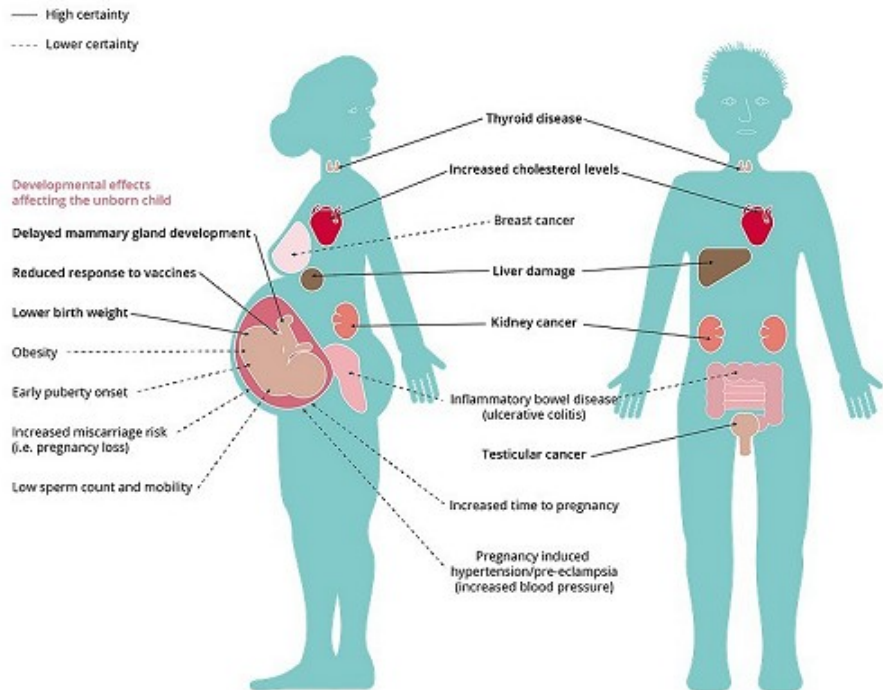
To:

With Love,



substances (PFAS), also known as "forever chemicals." After testing fish over the past two years, MDE determined that fifteen fish species at forty sites throughout Maryland's Chesapeake Bay require public health advisories due to PFAS concentrations. MDE began testing for PFAS after the St. Mary's River Watershed Association tested the St. Mary's River waters and oysters and found low levels of PFAS.

Many scientists and health advisors fear MDE's advisories are too lenient. While the family of PFAS contains thousands of compounds, MDE based their advisories on only one of these compounds, Perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), due to its notable levels at every testing site. Studies strongly indicate that other PFAS compounds also have adverse health impacts, and many scientists say all PFAS compounds should be measured and regulated cumulatively. MDE chose to not issue a PFAS advisory for a particular location and species if a more stringent advisory was already in place for another contaminant (mercury, lead, PCBs, etc).



PFAS effect on human health published by the European Environment Agency. Retrieved from: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/human/chemicals/emerging-chemical-risks-in-europe>]

For the Potomac River tributaries including the St. Mary's River, PFAS advisories are in place for silver perch, black sea bass, striped bass, and sunfish (photo: silver perch are in the drum family and are commonly confused with sea trout or white perch). Many other fish including carp, white catfish, and blue catfish have "avoid" advisories for PCBs and other contaminants.



MDE set no limits on oysters and crabs, except for an "avoid" advisory for the mustard in crabs. We highly recommend you watch the panel discussion [PFAS in the Chesapeake](#) that aired on Facebook November 16, 2020. Then decide for yourself and your family how you will or won't reduce PFAS in your life.



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



[Join or Renew Today!](#)

Save The Date:

- *A River Affair*

April 7, 2024
Ruddy Duck Seafood & Alehouse
Inquire by text 301-395-5757



- 11am- 4pm September 21, 2024
Historic St. Mary's City
Inquire by text 301-395-5757
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