

******* PRESS RELEASE *******

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SMRWA Sets Up an Oyster Nursery at SMCM

Summertime activity keeps things busy at the waterfront at the St. Mary's College of Maryland. College students can be seen lounging in the shade as they take a breather between summer classes, and the sounds of delighted children fill the air as buses bring them in to learn how to sail.

Since the beginning of August, the beach at St. Mary's has been filled with more than the usual excitement because it has been home to the St. Mary's River Watershed Association's new "spat-on-shell" oyster nursery. The 8-foot round nursery tank holds approximately two hundred bags of oyster shells. Each week, 2.5 million oyster larvae are introduced into the tank and grown on new shell for four days before being stockpiled in the river by the SMCM dock. The SMRWA plans to move these massive amounts of spat-on-shell into the oyster sanctuary in the St. Mary's River in the fall.

The SMRWA enlists the help of local volunteers to assist with loading the tank, bagging the shell, and transporting spat-on-shell to each site.



Student interns Paula Riner and David Wood incorporate the acclimated oyster larvae to the setting tank.



Oyster setting tank being filled with river water for the first time in preparation for soaking the shell.

"It's been a lot of hard work getting the project started, and there's still more to come," says Paula Riner, a student board member and summer intern at the SMRWA. "We're doing this to help rehabilitate the St. Mary's River, and ultimately, help save the Bay. It's a small step, but a noticeable one."

If interested in volunteering or would like more information, visit <http://www.smrwa.org> or contact us by email at info@stmarysriver.org.

